

This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King's Research Portal at <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/>



Jayaprakash Narayan and lok niti
Socialism, Gandhism and political cultures of protest in XX Century India

Kent Carrasco, Daniel

Awarding institution:
King's College London

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

END USER LICENCE AGREEMENT



Unless another licence is stated on the immediately following page this work is licensed

under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

licence. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Jayaprakash Narayan and *lok niti*: Socialism,
Gandhism and political cultures of protest in
XX Century India.**

Daniel Kent Carrasco

1222595

PhD Contemporary India Research

King's India Institute

King's College, London

Supervisors

Christophe Jaffrelot

&

Jon E. Wilson

Abstract

This work is devoted to situating the life, ideas and work of Jayaprakash Narayan in the horizon of protest and emancipatory politics in twentieth century India. It intends to show that JP must be taken as one of the main architects and promoters of political cultures of protest in XX century India, an ensemble of practices and forces acting within and outside the realm of institutional state politics, and involving political parties, anti-statist movements and non-governmental organizations. Despite being readily identified as a Gandhian socialist, my general argument in this dissertation is that JP's life-long political engagement with the politics of protest and emancipation should be decoded through the logic of a political culture of protest he identified with *lok niti*, a formula that embraces diverse ideals, practices and political strands of opposition to the state brought together by a common aversion to and rejection of "power-politics" or *raj niti*. I will argue that Gandhi's Non-Cooperation movement provided the event that created the fidelity that propelled JP into politics and that socialism was the framework through which he conceived of social transformation throughout his life. Indeed, socialism, Marxism and the ideas of Gandhi represented for JP little more than systems of interpretation that should be combined with others for the promotion of a truly revolutionary political practice of protest, which he defined as *lok niti*.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS.....	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
ABBREVIATIONS.....	7
1. INTRODUCTION.....	8
1.1 IDEAS, POLITICS AND HISTORY	8
1.2 EMANCIPATORY POLITICS, PROTEST AND POLITICAL CULTURES OF OPPOSITION	12
1.3 LOK NITI AND THE POLITICS OF PROTEST IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA.....	16
1.4 LOK NITI AND DEMOCRACY: ETHICAL OPPOSITION AND SWARAJ FOR THE COMMON MAN	20
1.5 JP'S LIFE OF PROTEST AND CONTEMPORARY TRAJECTORIES OF POLITICS IN INDIA	23
1.6 LOK NITI: PROTEST, POPULISM AND ANTIPOLITICS	26
1.7 CHAPTER LAYOUT	34
2. THE COMING OF JP: SWADESHI, NON-COOPERATION AND THE ORIGINS OF LOK NITI	37
2.1 THE BIRTH OF JP'S POLITICAL DEVOTION	38
2.2 <i>Before Non-Cooperation: The radicalism of early XX nationalist politics in India.....</i>	<i>48</i>
2.2.1 <i>The Masses of India and the Anti-Statist Politics of Swadeshi.....</i>	<i>49</i>
2.2.2 <i>National multitude and civilization as conduct.....</i>	<i>55</i>
2.3 SWARAJ AND THE TELEOLOGY OF LOK NITI	64
2.4. CONCLUSIONS	69
3. THE YOUNG JP AND SOCIALISM (1929-1947)	72
3.1 THE 1930S AND THE COMING OF THE CSP	73
3.1.1 <i>The 1920s: Jayaprakash in the US: Marxism and youthful impatience</i>	<i>73</i>
3.1.2 <i>Young Nationalists and Leftist Politics before the 1930s.....</i>	<i>78</i>
3.1.3 <i>The Congress Socialist Party.....</i>	<i>83</i>
3.2 THE YOUNG SWADESHI MARXIST: JP AND SOCIALISM, 1934-1947	89
3.2.1 <i>Denouncing the ugly fissures of society: A socialist revolution for the people.....</i>	<i>89</i>
3.2.2 <i>1940-1947: Turning Away from Materialism to Fend Off the Forces of Reaction.</i>	<i>97</i>
3.3 CONCLUSIONS	104
4. THE BIRTH OF LOK NITI: ANTI-STATISM, CONSTRUCTIVE WORK AND JP'S PATH FROM SOCIALISM TO SARVODAYA. (1948-1957).....	107
4.1 THE TWISTED DREAMS OF HUMANKIND	108
4.1.1 <i>Marx, Gandhi and the framework of alienation.....</i>	<i>108</i>
4.1.2 <i>"Incentives for Goodness" or the twisted dreams humankind.....</i>	<i>117</i>
4.2 THE BIRTH OF LOK NITI.....	124
4.2.1 <i>Jayaprakash and Vinoba's Bhoodan</i>	<i>124</i>
4.2.2 <i>Jayaprakash and Nehru: Lok and Raj Niti in the 1950s.....</i>	<i>132</i>
4.2.3 <i>The "revolution beautiful": Socialism, Sarvodaya and self-help</i>	<i>139</i>
4.3 AFFINITIES AND CONTRASTS: JP, THE RSS AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEW SPACES OF ANTI-STATIST ACTION.....	143
4.4 CONCLUSIONS	150
5. SOCIALISM AND PROTEST IN POSTCOLONIAL INDIA: JAYAPRAKASH, LOHIA AND NEHRU (1952-1967)	154

5.1 THE MEANINGS OF SOCIALISM	155
5.1.1 <i>Three brands of socialism for India</i>	155
5.1.2 <i>Jayaprakash and Lohia: contrasting trajectories</i>	160
5.1.3 <i>Lohia's socialism: doctrinal brilliance and political failure</i>	162
5.2 TWO SOCIALIST CRITIQUES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE NEHRUVIAN STATE	168
5.2.1 <i>Lohia's views on alternative development and JP's village development</i>	168
5.2.2 <i>Equality Vs. Freedom: Lohia's views on caste and history and the impossibility of lok niti</i>	175
5.3 THE ROUT OF THE SOCIALISTS.....	181
5.3.1 <i>Differences over revolution</i>	181
5.3.2 <i>Lok Niti and the return of dharma: Redefining Indian Polity away from the socialists</i>	186
5.4 CONCLUSIONS	192
6. THE OLD JP AND THE NEW INDIA: THE LAST STANCE OF THE LOK NAYAK (1974-1979)	195
6.1 REVIVING THE VIRTUOUS TRADITION OF 1921	197
6.1.1 <i>The First Decades of Independence and the Betrayal of the Ideal of Swaraj</i>	197
6.1.2 <i>Joining hands with the Post-Independence generation</i>	204
6.2 JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN, THE LOK NAYAK	213
6.2.1 <i>Total Revolution</i>	213
6.2.2 <i>The JP Movement as a triumph of populism</i>	218
6.3 1975: STATE OF EMERGENCY AND JP'S FINAL FIGHT	224
6.3.1 <i>The final transformation of JP's lok niti and the victory of the Janata Front</i>	226
6.4 THE LAST DAYS OF JP	230
6.4 CONCLUSIONS	238
7. CONCLUSIONS	240
7.1 SHIFTING LANDSCAPES OF PROTEST: THE LEGACIES OF JAYAPRAKASH AND THE ACTUALITY OF LOK NITI.....	240
7.2 JAYAPRAKASH THE PROTESTOR AND INDIAN DEMOCRACY	245
APPENDIX A	248
APPENDIX B	249
APPENDIX C	250
APPENDIX D	251
BIBLIOGRAPHY	252

List of Photographs

-Jayaprakash Narayan after receiving a blow during the lathi charge undertaken by police forces against protesters in Patna, 4 November 1975. Appendix A.....	234
-Jayaprakash Narayan addressing the rally of 6 March 1975, in Delhi. Appendix B.....	235
-Jayaprakash Narayan administering the pledge to members of Janata at Rajghat, before taking office, 24 March 1977. Appendix C.....	236
-JP and Morarji Desai in 1977. Appendix D... ..	237

Acknowledgements

Like all works of research and thought, this dissertation has been a collective endeavour. I wish to thank my friends and fellow PhD students at the India Institute for having shared with me these beautiful years and inspiring me with their curiosity. Aasim, Anna, James, Jean-Thomas, Nishant, Perna, Raphaëlle, Smitana, Swapna, Vahit, Vipul: *laal salaam* and *dhanyabad* for making this Mexican feel at home, both in London and Delhi. A very special thank you to Shankar, who guided me and my family through the streets of Safdarjung Extension.

I also wish to express my gratitude to my generous and stimulating supervisors, Christophe Jaffrelot and Jon E. Wilson, as well as to the faculty and staff of the India Institute. Many thanks to Nilanjan Sarkar, whose never-ending kindness and rigour were crucial during the early stages of this work. This work was greatly enriched by the rigorous, honest and engaging interventions of my two external readers, Faisal Devji and Shabnum Tejani. They helped me take my work several steps forward, prompting me to think of new and exciting possibilities. Muchas gracias to those who commented, read, and discussed sections of this work during these past few years, especially Saurabh Dube, Ishita Banerjee, Aditya Nigam and Carlos Illades. This dissertation could not have been completed without your kind help and support.

Thanks to my family and friends in Cholula, DF and Oaxaca; gracias for making all this possible and enjoyable.

This work is dedicated to my two girls. Valentina: thank you for discovering life (and India) with me. And Áruna: whose life began in London and bloomed in Delhi and who is now our little fellow traveller.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AITUC	All-India Trade Union Congress
CPI	Communist Party of India
CSP	Congress Socialist Party
JP	Jayaprakash Narayan
PSS	Praja Socialist Party
SP	Socialist Party

1. Introduction

Ideas are very forceful and effective and possess the potentiality of effecting changes in the minds of masses. Buddha, Christ, Mohammad, Marx and Gandhiji changed society through the dynamism of their ideas. Man is distinguished from cattle because of ideas.

-Jayaprakash Narayan, 1954¹

*Ask history whether years before
I could not have become Prime Minister.*

*But for a researcher in revolution
Some other paths were acceptable, worth pursuing,
Paths of sacrifice, of service, of construction,
Paths of struggle, of Total Revolution!*

-Jayaprakash Narayan, 1975²

1.1 Ideas, Politics and History

The first epigraph used to open this introduction was chosen in accordance with my intention to write a study of the lives and uses of political ideas in the history of contemporary India. The second intends to clarify the focus of my work: namely, the thought and practice of Jayaprakash Narayan, the *Lok Nayak*, with regards to state power, protest and revolution. The materials upon which I have based my analysis were extracted from the broad body of writings left behind by JP—including ideological and political manifestos, party documents, press writings and personal correspondence and confessions—as well as those produced by figures that JP interacted with, responded to and fought against during his life. This group includes early XX century radical nationalists, Congress party stalwarts, pioneers of institutional socialism and important players in the arena of postcolonial politics in India.

This work is meant to be an intellectual biography, as well as a work of intellectual history that explores the relationship between political thought, practices of protest and social change in XX century India. In this sense, this

¹ Significance of the Bhoodan Movement, Speech given on 3 January 1954, at Patna, in Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954) (Delhi: Manohar, 2003), 394.

² "Prison Diary", 9 September 1975, original in Hindi, translation by Bimal Prasad, in *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. X (1972-1979) (Delhi: Manohar, 2009), 526.

dissertation draws heavily upon the work done previously in the field of intellectual history in South Asia. This is a field that, as has been pointed out by Shruti Kapila³, was shaped in recent decades by potent studies of the role of the colonial state in the creation of the social and political worlds of Modern South Asia⁴, as well as by concerns with questions of colonial governmentality and epistemology.⁵ Other major works have dealt with the movements of social reform in colonial Bengal,⁶ the influence of early British orientalism in the creation of racial and religious identities in colonial India,⁷ the genealogy of the social lives of concepts⁸ and ideas⁹ in modern India, as well as the development of bourgeois consciousness in colonial urban settings.¹⁰ In recent years, an effort has been made to think and write about the history of political thought in India. Among the most significant works produced in this respect are C. A. Bayly's study of the liberal tradition in India,¹¹ Jon Wilson's analysis of the anxious roots of state-craft in South Asia,¹² and the volume of essays, edited jointly by Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji, that explores the ways varied readings of the *Bhagavad Gita* were played out in the political arena of British India.¹³ Further, a recent edited volume has brought together innovative readings of the thought of

³ Shruti Kapila, *An Intellectual History for India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), v.

⁴ Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Delhi Oxford University Press, 1959).

⁵ Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge : The British in India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁶ David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance. The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773-1835.* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1969); C. A. Bayly, "Rammohan Roy and the Advent of Constitutional Liberalism in India, 1800-30," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 1 (2007).

⁷ Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Delhi: Yoda Press, 2004).

⁸ Gyan Prakash, "The Colonial Genealogy of Society. Community and Political Modernity in India," in *The Social in Question. New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, ed. Patrick Joyce (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁹ Shabnum Tejani, *Indian Secularism : A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950* (Bangalore: Permanent Black, 2007).

¹⁰ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments : Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J. ; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹¹ C. A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties : Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire : The Wiles Lectures Given at the Queen's University of Belfast, 2007* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹² Jon E. Wilson, *The Domination of Strangers. Modern Governance in Eastern India, 1780-1835* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

¹³ Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji, *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Aurobindo, Tilak, Maulana Azad and Iqbal, along with novel engagements with issues of Islamic modernity, colonial cultures of translation and translational intellectual exchanges in the XIX century.¹⁴ In this sense, the XIX century and the early years of the XX have been the periods privileged by the most important works of intellectual history of South Asia. However, a small number of studies have also ventured beyond the fertile XIX century to focus on the evolution of colonial varieties of cosmopolitan Marxism,¹⁵ the role of South Asia in transnational networks of intellectual exchange¹⁶ and the debates at the origin of the political idea of Pakistan.¹⁷

This dissertation focuses on the role of ideas and sensibilities of protest in the growth and spread of political cultures of opposition in India during the twentieth century. Despite the richness of the material available, this is a field to which little attention has been paid.¹⁸ This is especially surprising given that all of the most relevant political thinkers, activists, ideologues and organizers in India during this period—from Tagore to Lohia, from Savarkar to Nehru—were at one point or another leaders of opposition and promoters of protest. The main goal of the present work is to contribute to the study of intellectual history of India and address this gap in the existing literature through the analysis of the tenets, goals and origins of an important and widespread political culture defined by the ideal of *lok niti*. For this purpose, it will focus on the thought and ideas of Jayaprakash Narayan, a central and understudied figure of contemporary political and intellectual history in India, in the growth and spread of techniques of protest, opposition and emancipatory politics during the twentieth century. Despite focusing on JP, the arguments developed here will also deal with trajectories and spaces of politics that have been central to the consolidation of the recent

¹⁴ Kapila, *An Intellectual History for India*.

¹⁵ Kris Manjappa, "Communist Internationalism and Transcolonial Recognition," in *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones. South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas*, ed. Sugata Bose and Kris Manjappa (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁶ M. N. Roy : *Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism* (Delhi: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁷ Faisal Devji, *Muslim Zion. Pakistan as a Political Idea* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013).

¹⁸ This is not the case regarding the study of the nineteenth century, a field in which ground-breaking studies have been published, including the classic work by Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

political landscape of India, marked by an insistence on privileging the society before the state as the arena for politics.

In recent years, important attention has been devoted to the study of the thought of Gandhi. I posit that JP's ideas must be seen in conversation with Gandhi's, and that the importance of the former cannot be grasped without such an exercise. In Gandhi's thought it is possible to find numerous challenges to the concepts and categories behind modern politics; in JP's, on the other hand, one finds a challenge to the procedures and practices of modern statist political craft. Gandhi's thought has been widely discussed as an attempt to rethink accepted notions of sovereignty, anti-statism, realism, democracy, liberalism and the ideals of the European Enlightenment.¹⁹ JP's, in turn, must be analysed in relation to structures—like the state and the party—procedures—like reform, planning and voting—and cultures of politics based on the opposition to and challenge of power politics. The period I will discuss covers the first seven decades of the twentieth century, thus involving historical processes involved the decline of the colonial regime and the establishment of the postcolonial state. This is a work of history of political thought and practice. But also, it is an attempt to historicize the creation of political cultures that, despite emerging from particular milieus and marked by definite symbols and entrenched practices, develop in ways that transform and give new meanings to “global” ideas and programmes. In the case of this study, my interest is to trace the contours, origins and manifestations of the political culture of *lok niti*, through which modern ideologies, notably socialism, and ideas, notably revolution, were codified through the appeal to local ensembles of practices of protest and political and intellectual articulations.

¹⁹ Akeel Bilgrami, "Gandhi, the Philosopher," *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 39 (2003); "Gandhi, Newton, and the Enlightenment," *Social Scientist* 34, no. 5/6 (2006); "Gandhi and Marx," *Social Scientist* 40, no. 9/10 (2012); Faisal Devji, *The Impossible Indian : Gandhi and the Temptation of Violence* (London: Hurst, 2012); "Morality in the Shadow of Politics," in *Political Thought in Action. The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, ed. Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Karuna Mantena, "Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (2012); Ajay Skaria, "Gandhi's Politics: Liberalism and the Question of the Ashram," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002).

1.2 Emancipatory Politics, Protest and Political Cultures of Opposition

I am born in a Hindu family but I call myself a Hindustani and my religion is revolution.

-Jayaprakash Narayan, 1946²⁰

Throughout his life, Jayaprakash defended various brands of emancipatory politics that ranged from the socialist utopia to Gandhian *Sarvodaya* passing through the project of national self-rule. He brought these contending projects together through his devotion to protest and people's power, or *lok niti*. In this dissertation the study of the life and thought of Jayaprakash Narayan, which evolved at par with the most momentous events and movements of protest and revolution of the twentieth century in India, will serve as a window through which I mean to explore the different meanings given to the ideas and practices of protest and emancipation.

Interpreted in terms of the conceptual framework developed by Reinhart Koselleck, defined by the coupling between spaces of experience and horizons of expectation,²¹ JP's life (1902-1979) serves as a privileged way of approaching the transition from one horizon of expectation, defined by the prospect of national independence and socialist emancipation, to another in which the promise of such a revolution had lost most of its appeal and coherence, not only in India but in the broader terrain of the Third World. In this sense, JP's life can be seen as roughly coinciding with a definite cycle in the practices of protest and the ideas of emancipation in India. As will be made clear in the following chapters, this cycle was marked by the transit from a political horizon coloured by the prospect of a

²⁰ Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. IV, (1946-1948) (Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 91-2.

²¹ See "Time and History", in Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 100-14. For Koselleck, the relation between present, past and future is constituted through the coming together of the complementary categories of experience and expectation. These two constitute what he calls a metahistorical conceptual couple in as much as concrete histories are inconceivable without them. Experience presents in his view a part of the past that has been incorporated, preserved and remembered in the present. Expectation, on the other hand, comprehends the "future-made-present," the hopes, fears and desires that meaning to any given present. In this regard, Koselleck speaks of a "horizon" of expectation that is generated by a common experience at a given moment and place.

national emancipation and a revolutionary emphasis on social transformation through the state, to one of post-ideological and anti-political thought and action.

This work will follow a broad approach to emancipatory politics that takes into account the importance of sustained practices of protest and projects of radical transformation of the horizons and terrains of politics, as well as an expansion of the possibilities of collective action. For this reason, the main focus of the project will rest on the ideas and states of mind involved in historical moments of change. In this work, protest is conceived of as the practice of both thinking about and promoting radical change. In this sense, protest involves standing up against established notions of what politics means and includes, as well as fighting to extend the horizon of politics endowing it with new and unforeseen possibilities.

The normative thrust of modern projects of political protest emerges out of the felt need to provide solutions to the social evils of injustice and inequality. In this sense, the idea of protest is inextricably linked to the idea of revolution. In this work, I will follow the cue of the political theorist Benjamin Ardit, who has argued for the usefulness and necessity of disengaging revolution from any strong notions of totality and placing it under the general heading of emancipation in the hope of generating the possibility of rethinking the will to revolution not only in reference to moments of inauguration, destruction or re-foundation, but also, and more fundamentally, in relation to a wider and drawn out *activity of revolutionizing*.²²

I will not try to offer a new or revised definition of revolution by drawing on historical material from India, nor is it my concern to engage in the study and analysis of “successful” or “failed” revolutions in order to extract laws and norms that may explain why at times revolutions fail while at others they succeed. Rather, I am interested in reflecting upon the meanings attached to the idea of revolution and the ways in which these meanings generate new and original practices of political protest that transform widespread cultures and traditions of

²² Benjamin Ardit, *Politics on the Edges of Liberalism. Difference, Populism, Revolution, Agitation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 108-35. Emphasis mine.

politics through time. The strategy presented above of thinking about revolution under the broader logic of a practice of emancipation can prove useful for engaging in detailed studies of the formation and evolution of cultures of opposition and protest over long periods of time, as I set out to do in this dissertation. Moreover, it can help us to avoid thinking of political change through what David Scott has identified as narratives of overcoming, vindication, salvation and redemption that link past, present and future through a narrative logic of romance according to which events move in sequential and processional form in the direction of an end already known in advance and defined by a utopian horizon of inevitable revolution.²³

Since the late 1960s, the study of political protest has shifted from an approach that perceived in protest an irrational,²⁴ even pathological,²⁵ form of collective behaviour that was detrimental to the development of an orderly political life, to approaches that have focused on the use of the expression collective *action* rather than *behaviour*, including important work on historical sociology,²⁶ the theory of resource mobilization,²⁷ and the analysis of the political strategies of subaltern or oppositional collectives.²⁸

The present project explores the ways in which imaginaries and practices of protest involve particular kinds of “meaning work”, defined as “the production

²³ David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity. The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); *Omens of Adversity. Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014).

²⁴ See Carl F. Graumann and Serge Moscovici, *Changing Conceptions of Crowd Mind and Behavior* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986); Gustave Le Bon and R. K. Merton, *The Crowd : A Study of the Popular-Mind* (New York: Viking Press, 1960); Serge Moscovici, *The Age of the Crowd : A Historical Treatise on Mass Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

²⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (London: The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1922).

²⁶ See especially Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978); *European Revolutions, 1492-1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

²⁷ Anthony Oberschall, *Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities* (New Brunswick (U.S.A.): Transaction, 1993); Michael Lipsky, "Protest as a Political Resource," *American Political Science Review* 62, no. 4 (1968); William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990).

²⁸ See James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance : Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 1990); Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action. Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965); Russell Hardin, *Collective Action* (Baltimore: Published for Resources for the Future by the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

of mobilizing and counter-mobilizing ideas and meanings”,²⁹ and, at the same time present societies and individuals with the opportunity to articulate, elaborate, alter, or affirm moral sensibilities, principles, and allegiances.³⁰ In this sense, I will follow James M. Jasper’s argument regarding the important role that practices of protest play in the development and dissemination of new social perspectives and the articulation of moral visions and beliefs in modern societies.³¹ Additionally, I am interested in exploring practices and projects of emancipation and protest in relation to what John Foran has called political cultures of opposition, referring to the coming together of “ideologies, organizational networks, common subjectivities related to historical experiences and emotions, and shared cultural idioms.”³²

The arguments developed in this work are meant to contribute to the study of the importance of the history of political thought in India, beyond the figure of Gandhi, in the growth and spread of techniques of civil resistance and oppositional politics during the twentieth century. With this aim in mind, I will follow John Foran’s definition of political cultures and posit that Jayaprakash Narayan was the central figure in the promotion of the political culture of opposition of *lok niti*, developed in the period stretching from the early 1930s until the creation of the Janata government in 1977. This political culture of opposition brought together the moral ethos and revolutionary potential of Gandhian thought with the utopian programme of socialism. Further, and in relation to the processes described above, I will argue that it must be seen as a significant precursor to the landscapes of protest developed after the 1970s in different locations across the world and in India, as well as an early attempt to harness

²⁹ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26(2000): 613.

³⁰ James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest : Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 15.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 375.

³² John Foran, *Taking Power. On the Origins of Third World Revolutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 22.

together what Rahul Rao has referred to as cosmopolitan and communitarian sensibilities of protest in defence of a project of political emancipation.³³

1.3 Lok Niti and the politics of protest in contemporary India

We are leaving to the politicians, to the state and to the government, the main task of building up this country and of changing it. It is there that we go wrong.

Jayaprakash Narayan, 1969³⁴

The Government is after all only a bucket, while the people are like a well.
Vinoba Bhave³⁵

Lok niti—an expression translatable as “people’s politics” or “popular politics”—is a formula that embraces diverse political stands of opposition brought together by a common aversion to and rejection of “power-politics”. In this sense, *lok niti* can be seen as a shared inclination across diverse movements of protest in twentieth century India. With notable exceptions such as the life and thought of early century international revolutionaries like M. N. Roy or Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and the involvement of Jawaharlal Nehru in the gestation of the Third World project, the prophecy of a global, internationalist revolution, such as the one envisioned by Marx, had limited popular appeal in India during the XX century. The prospect of radical social change and emancipation in India during this time, I will argue, has been formulated against the working of the state, both colonial and postcolonial. In this sense, many, if not most, of the projects of political protest of this time can be grouped as instances of *lok niti*, which must be seen, as will be shown through an examination of the work of Jayaprakash Narayan, as a result of the historical continuity of genealogies of anticolonial politics of opposition and contestation.

The formula of *lok niti* was first used in the context of Indian national politics by the Gandhian activist Vinoba Bhave during the early 1950s. Bhave

³³ Rahul Rao, *Third World Protest : Between Home and the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³⁴ Need for a Non-Violent Social Revolution on India’s Political Agenda, Address given to the National Conference of Voluntary Agencies, New Delhi New Delhi, 8 June 1969, in Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. IX (1969-1972) (Delhi Manohar, 2008), 293.

³⁵ Cited in Suresh Ram, *Vinoba and His Mission. Being an Account of the Growth and Development of the Bhoodan Yagna Movement*. (Kashi, India: Akhil Bharat Sarv Seva Sangh, 1954), 408.

integrated the idea of *lok niti* as a central component of his critique of democracy in India, which, he argued, represented a tyrannical project of minority rule over the vast majority of the people, and of the increasing power of the state over Indian society following independence. He argued that the growth of the state was detrimental to the capacity of people to self-govern and self-organize; indeed, the highly centralised administration of the Indian postcolonial state appeared to him as a betrayal of the long fight for *swaraj*—or self-rule—that had taken place in India since the beginning of the twentieth century. He consciously sought to extend Gandhi’s ideal of a stateless society through the promotion of *loka shakti*, or people’s power, over the dangerous spread of the *danda shakti* of the state. For Bhave, *raj niti*, or the power politics of the institutions of the state and the political parties, was a practice of governance based on coercion that encouraged authoritarian power, bred anxiety and rivalry among the people, and hindered the possibility of true self-government, which was only attainable through discipline, self-control and solidarity. True social change, he argued, could only be brought about through a transformation of the sentiments of the people, and never through state action.³⁶ In opposition to the corrupting effects of centralised government, Bhave put forward the ideal of *Sarvodaya*, defined broadly as the promotion of decentralised power in the interest of bringing about “freedom from government.”³⁷

Following a personal process of disenchantment with regards to the Congress and the political dynamics of the newly formed national state in India developed during the early 1950s, Jayaprakash joined Vinoba’s *Bhoodan* movement, based on the promotion of voluntary land donations and the recovery of the endangered Indian village. During this period he adopted the latter’s usage of *lok niti* as a central tenet of his politics. JP’s first use of the term appears in an article published in 1954, in which he promoted *Bhoodan* as the path towards the obtainment of the Gandhian ideal of the stateless society.³⁸ By 1957, with the

³⁶ For a condensed account of Vinoba’s defence of *loka shakti* and *lok niti*, see the register of his arguments present in *ibid.*, 400-10.

³⁷ Vinoba Bhave, *Democratic Values* (Kashi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1962), 3.

³⁸ “Jeevandan”, published in *Janata*, 27 June, 1954.

publication of his famous tract *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, we find that JP had thoroughly adopted the distinction between *raj* and *lok niti* as a central axiom of his political project of opposition which, from then onwards, would hinge on an effort to reconcile the aims and theoretical framework of socialism with Gandhi's defence of non-violence. In recent years, the formula of *lok niti* has been adopted by defendants of the ideal of party-less democracy and opponents to the working of state institutions and political parties, most notably in the wide NGO sector.³⁹

Throughout this dissertation I will clarify what the *lok* of *lok niti* meant for Jayaprakash. However, it is necessary to clarify a few important points in this regard at the present time. First of all, a tentative answer to the question of *why* JP chose to use *lok* instead of other terms like *jan*—a word with an approximate meaning and widely used in Indian politics, most notably by groups like the Jana Sangh—or merely “the people”—as used by Indian communist and other left wing groups—must be provided. In the case of his preference of *lok* over “the people”, the answer most likely stems from two related factors: first, there is JP's lifelong antagonism towards communist parties and leaders following the rout between the different sections of the nationalist left in the late 1930s, a process discussed in chapter 3; secondly, one must take into account his effort, common among other members of the socialist movement following independence, to use and spread an indigenous vocabulary and imaginary of politics capable of better addressing the needs and potentialities of Indian society than the seemingly out-dated and foreign liberal idiom. In the case of JP's preference of *lok* over *jan*, the issue is a little more complicated and revealing. While both terms refer to people and the popular, there are a couple of important distinctions in connotation and etymology that account for significant differences between them. *Jan* is related to the word used to describe birth or genesis (*janm*) and thus appears as more ascriptive and exclusionary. Further, *jan* also refers to a certain native or original quality, such as appears clearly in the expression *jan jati* used to refer to the

³⁹ Tellingly, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, a regional association of NGOs, named its journal *Lok Niti*:
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/1266/Lokniti_Land_Grab_Mar2012.pdf
(Accessed on 12 December, 2014)

adivasi, or indigenous population of India. On the other hand, *lok* has more ideally political connotations, referring to an open and unqualified conception of the public. Rather than being based on a belonging to a definite class, caste, region or community, *lok* refers to a unity that emerges from solidarity rather than equality. In this sense, it is closer to the western idea of the *demos*. Further, *lok* had been used, at least since the early XX century, to mobilize masses of people for the purposes of political protest, like in the case of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, popularly known as the *Lokmanya* or the accepted by the people.

In the use given to it by Jayaprakash after the early 1950s, *lok niti* emerges as an inheritance of the radical, mobilization-based nationalism of the first decades of the XX century, which rejected any association with or defence of the workings and institutions of the colonial state. As a result, JP's *lok niti* was inherently associative in its practice but obeyed a logic marked by a basic antagonism with regards to the state. Further, and despite preceding important aspects of recent theoretical articulations of the multitude as a plural and inherently open subject of sovereignty, JP's *lok niti* was justified as a means of defending a specific articulation of the civilization of India, common among commentators and thinkers of the *swadeshi* years, in the face of the modern, materialist West. With regards to its origin, development and theoretical implications, and following John Foran's formulation exposed above, I will posit that *lok niti* encapsulates an important and widespread political culture of opposition and protest in twentieth century India. The main postulates of this political culture rest on moral grounds rather than a structured political agenda. Likewise, it articulates projects based on claims like the denunciation of corruption and the attack on the procedures, symbols and workings of *raj niti*—the politics of kingly, *zamindari* and state power—described as distant, arbitrary, unjust and alienating. Ambiguous and fruitful, *lok niti* represents a political culture of protest capable of including both populist and erudite registers and of rallying confronted sectors in a common rejection of the vices and shortcomings of institutional and party politics.

1.4 Lok Niti and Democracy: Ethical Opposition and Swaraj for the Common Man

In her study of the postcolonial state in India, Srirupa Roy identifies a “set of normative understandings” perpetuated during the Nehruvian era in order to endorse “particular ways of seeing and comprehending” the state, the nation and citizenship which, together, “organized the political field in postcolonial India.” One of these understandings, Roy posits, is the idealization of apolitical behaviour, an attitude that grouped the distaste shared by political and intellectual elites and social movement activists with the profane nature of political action, marked by corruption and petty interests.⁴⁰ I want to suggest that the political culture of opposition defined by *lok niti* is a sublimated product of this rhetoric rejection of politics, and as such can be seen as one of the most important forms of accommodation of protests *inside* the project of Indian democracy.

The relationship between JP’s politics and the nationalist narrative of democracy opens several different strands of inquiry, which I am interested in pursuing in this project. I suspect that the reason why Jayaprakash Narayan, despite having actively participated in the most important episodes of socio-political transformation of the twentieth century in India, is currently a faded figure to which no major group outside the limited orbit of left wing and socialist parties in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh pledges allegiance is the result of his ambiguous and lukewarm relationship to democracy. Prior to 1947, JP did not devote much attention to political democracy, a concept he equated with national freedom and independence from British rule. However, during the 1930s and 40s, he laid great emphasis on the need to struggle for economic democracy, which he saw as the joint goal of *swaraj* and socialism. During the height of his stage as a socialist leader, in 1938, he declared that *swaraj* for India had “to mean *Swaraj* for the poor. Over and above political democracy, *Swaraj* must mean economic democracy. For this purpose the capitalist oligarchy has to be

⁴⁰ Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham, N.C. ; London: Duke University Press, 2007), 19-22.

destroyed and economic power transferred to the people in general.”⁴¹ Against the grain of the predominant Nehruvian discourse following independence, JP defended an anti-statist version of democracy, according to which “the people should depend as little as possible on the State.” Regarding this, in 1948 he declared to be following the thought of Gandhi and Marx, both of whom identified “the highest stage of democracy (as) that in which the State has withered away.”⁴²

Thereafter he would equate democracy with a true and complete *swaraj* achievable through moral discipline, the conscious limitation of personal wants and longings, and a return to the original institutions of Indian civilization located in the villages. During the years immediately following independence JP signalled the Congress as the main obstacle in the way of such a party-less democracy, and emphasised the urgent need to go beyond the bureaucratic constraints of the state and the corroding logic of *raj niti* in order to revitalize the agonizing political community of India. By the late 1950s, JP’s total loss of faith in the project of democracy—a regime he came to equate with “elected oligarchy”⁴³—is evident in his writing and public declarations. In his later years, he opposed democracy to the virtuous voluntarism and self-sacrifice of Gandhian *sarvodaya*, and denounced parliamentary procedures as the biggest obstacle for the obtainment of true *swaraj*.

JP’s troubled relationship with democracy turns him into an uncomfortable figure not only for defendants of triumphalist official accounts of the independent nation in India, but also for those adhering to the predominant logic that identifies social movements as movements for democracy.⁴⁴ In order to defend my

⁴¹ Lecture on “The Task Before Us”, 30 January 1938, Socialist Study Centre, Patna. Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. II (1935-1939) (Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 205.

⁴² Annual Report of the General Secretary, *Socialist Party, Sixth Annual Conference, Nasik, 19-21 March 1948*, pp. 84-103. Ibid., IV, (1946-1948): 240.

⁴³ *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, 30 September 1959, in Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960) (Delhi: Manohar, 2005), 438.

⁴⁴ See Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; Karl-Dieter Opp, *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements. A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Jack A. Goldstone, “Introduction. Bridging Institutionalized and Non-Institutionalized Politics,” in *State, Parties, and Social Movements*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone

identification of JP as a central figure in the history of protest politics and projects of revolution in contemporary India, I will argue that JP's *lok niti* practices were not meant to propitiate democracy, but must in turn be seen as the result of his investment in early twentieth-century traditions of debates on socialist projects of social justice, as well as in what C. A. Bayly has identified as the Indian tradition of political ethics, of which Gandhian ideas of socio-cultural reform and socio-political nativism are probably the most notorious representations, but which also include the patriotic sentiments of early and mid XIX century Indian nationalists, as well as those of later figures like Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Aurobindo and early XX century defendants of *swadeshi* radicalism.⁴⁵ JP united these two strands not through a concern with democracy, as has been argued by Ranabir Samaddar,⁴⁶ but through a felt moral need to oppose the workings of institutional power.

Despite generating an uncomfortable friction with the normative statist discourse of democracy and modernization by its defence of currents of thought, modes of organization and claims that are not completely secular, nor entirely modern, I will nevertheless argue that *lok niti* in fact contributes to the legitimation of the project of democracy by expanding the latter's capacity to include protest and radical opposition within it. In this sense, the evolution of the culture of *lok niti* must be seen as running parallel to the formation and gradual dismantling of the Nehruvian state, commonly referred to as the "Golden Age" of Indian politics, and as preceding important antipolitical and populist trajectories and practices of protest and moral denunciation which, since the 1980s, have transformed the political landscape of India. These trajectories include the rise of the ensemble of forces of Hindu nationalism, the emergence of the contingent of the new social movements, and the coming together of the agitations and actors that, after 2011, gave way to the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi.

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). And, for the case of India, Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution : New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993).

⁴⁵ C. A. Bayly, *Origins of Nationality in South Asia. Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴⁶ Ranabir Samaddar, "Jayaprakash Narayan and the Problem of Representative Democracy," *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 31 (2008).

1.5 JP's life of protest and contemporary trajectories of politics in India

JP's career as an intellectual, agitator and organizer was marked by an incessant effort to promote the practice of protest in the face of existing power structures. Born in Patna in 1902, the year of the creation of the anticolonial terrorist association *Anushilan Samiti*, Jayaprakash grew up during the unfolding of the *swadeshi* movement and came to age with Gandhi's Non-Cooperation *satyagraha* at a time of significant radicalization of the political activity of Indian opponents to the British Empire. Like the members of revolutionary organizations of the time like the *Ghadar* party, JP did not come from the most privileged sections of Indian society, nor was he born in a region placed at the heart of nationalist and anticolonial effervescence. He belonged to a young generation of radical nationalists inspired by the impatience of Tilak and the fiery promises of Aurobindo. He was subsequently 'converted' to Marxism during a long stay in the United States where he, unable to afford to study in Britain and having rejected British education in India as part of his embrace of Non-Cooperation, travelled in the early 1920s. Following his return to India in 1929, just weeks before the crash of the Stock Market in New York, he became the leading ideologue and organizer of the Congress Socialist Party, a body committed to the radicalization of the nationalist movement. During the early 1940s, he became an important player in the climatic Quit India movement.

After independence, already in possession of a reputation for heroic patriotism and sacrifice, JP drifted gradually from party politics towards "people politics" or *lok niti*, contributing to the spread of Gandhian ideas of voluntarism that were to become central to the rhetoric and action of social movements, non-governmental organizations and oppositional politics in the following decades. Between the 1950s and the 1970s he was among the harshest and most active critics of the Indian government. In 1975, he crowned two decades of attacks on the state and the Congress by leading an important movement of protest against the government of Indira Gandhi. He influenced the career of important politicians like V.P. Singh, Nitish Kumar and Laloo Prasad Yadav, and played a

crucial role in the formation of the Janata Coalition of 1977, the first political force other than the Congress to form a government in independent India.

In the realm of non-statist politics, JP must be seen as a forefather of important sectors of the NGO community, as well as a precursor for current movements rallied around the flag of anti-corruption and the opposition to immoral political practices. Furthermore, his constant denunciation of what he perceived as the degeneration of power politics and the workings of the Indian state since the 1950s must be seen as a direct precedent to the arguments made by the Sangh Parivar in the 1980s and 1990s claiming the insolvency of the Congress and the Nehruvian project. For all these reasons, Jayaprakash Narayan must not only be seen as an icon of the practice of protest and revolution, but as an important figure for the history of both the left and the right wings in contemporary India.

Despite having participated in the creation and promotion of diverse movements, institutions and parties, JP's most important legacy for the recent political landscape of India was his crucial contribution to the creation and expansion of a space for anti-statist politics which focuses on the transformation of society, the promotion of individual and collective autonomy in the face of power, the rejection of dated and "foreign" ideologies in favour of indigenous models of thought and organization, and the emphasis on the importance of the people, the *lok* and the common man. Indeed, JP's *lok niti* can be seen as a continuation of a definite strand of modern political thought in India, which includes figures such as Vivekananda, Tagore and Aurobindo, that has approached the problem of power, freedom and social harmony from the perspective of society in detriment of the state.⁴⁷

Seen from this angle, it is very significant that JP's career of protest reached its peak and culmination in the 1970s, a decade that saw a radical transformation of the political landscape of India. On one front, the early 1970s saw the growth and entrenchment of Naxalism, as well as the emergence of a

⁴⁷ Dennis Gilmore Dalton, *Indian Idea of Freedom : Political Thought of Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore* (Gurgaon: Academic Press, 1982), 15.

startlingly varied and combative gamut of protest movements, including the Dalit Panthers, the Jharkand Mukti Morcha and the All-Assam Student's Union. At the same time an important upsurge of women's, anti-caste movement, environmental and farmers movements appeared during these same years, which opposed and challenged the programme of development promoted by the national state, as well as entrenched forms of domination prevalent in the society. An important shift brought about by such movements was the conceptual rejection of both traditional Marxist approaches to the centrality of class and the state in favour of a more plural organization base, structured by caste, gender and other socio-economic identities, as well as of the established emulation of the industrial West as a model for social transformation.⁴⁸

In contrast to earlier movements of protest and social transformation, which had aimed at the reformation of society in concrete aspects through rebellions and revolts against agents of the postcolonial state, the movements and forces that emerged during the 1970s were acting in a political landscape marked by the deinstitutionalization of the state and the Congress as well as the fragmentation of older leftist forces.⁴⁹ At the same time, these movements were reacting against the results of the "brutal dislocation" brought about by the forces of capitalist development and the economic programmes of the state⁵⁰, and focused on the need to promote social autonomy, political and economic decentralization and people's power. As we will see in the following chapters, this was a process and a set of demands that JP greatly contributed to and consistently defended during the decades following the establishment of the national state. In this sense, his *lok niti* appears as an important previous stage

⁴⁸ The innovations and challenges posed by these new social movements have been analysed in depth in Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution : New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*; "Peasants, Dalits and Women: Democracy and India's New Social Movements," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 24, no. 1 (1994).

⁴⁹ Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, "Introduction. In the Beginning There Was the Nehruvian State," in *Social Movements in India. Power, Poverty and Politics*, ed. Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2005), 8-9.

⁵⁰ Amrita Basu, "Grass Roots Movements and the State: Reflections on Radical Change in India," *Theory and Society* 16, no. 5 (1987).

in the development of these trajectories of anti-statist political action and grassroots organisation.

On another front, the peak of JP's life of protest coincided also with an important moment of consolidation of the forces, both ideological and institutional, of Hindu nationalism, notably the Jana Sangh and the RSS.

Despite the apparent contradiction between JP's defence of the goal of socialism and the programme of the RSS, both shared a similar original thrust and a common set of concerns regarding the centrality of the society and the harmful effect of the state. In many ways, the mission of nation-building and character-building espoused by the RSS since its origins in 1925, as well as the organisation's open rejection to be involved in formal politics, mirrored the central tenets of JP's *lok niti*. Moreover, ever since the transfer of power in 1947, the RSS and JP both focused on the importance of promoting constructive work in detriment of an engagement with institutional politics. The closeness generated by this common trajectory was strengthened by the opposition shared by JP and the RSS to the programmes of the national state and the figure of Nehru during the 1950s and 60s. Moreover, the power and influence of the Jana Sangh, the political arm of the RSS, would grow immensely following the party's involvement in the JP movement during 1974-1975 and its inclusion in the Janata coalition of 1977. In this sense, JP's leadership must be seen as having played a crucial role in the emergence of the BJP (1980), the party that transformed the dynamics of national politics in the following decades.

In virtue of its relationship to these important trajectories and processes, the study of the life and thought of JP can be seen as fruitful way of approaching the political history of India's XX century through the problem of society rather than the state. At the same time, his defence of *lok niti*, I will argue, can be seen as an important source of antipolitical attitudes and languages of protest and opposition in contemporary India.

1.6 Lok Niti: Protest, Populism and Antipolitics

It has been so far been argued that *lok niti* is a formula that codifies a broad political culture of opposition of which diverse practices of protest developed in India during the XX century participated. As a result of its origins in the midst of the anticolonial mobilizations of the early decades of the XX century, and its later consolidation as part of the repertoire of protest used in India between the 1930s and the 1970s, *lok niti* crystallised through the coming together of the assumptions and techniques of Gandhian protest and the vision of equality and freedom promoted by revolutionary socialism. Anti-statist and fundamentally concerned with ethics and morality, *lok niti* fostered an essentially associative political practice based on an anarchist conception of sovereignty that bears strong resemblance to the position that defends the multitude as a revolutionary subject.⁵¹ At the same time, such an associative practice emerged as a result of a fundamentally oppositional logic that drew a sharp line between the virtuous domain of the *lok* and the corrupt ambit of *raj niti* or power politics. In this sense, it can be seen as following the logic of populism based on the construction of internally diverse popular blocs in defence of a common oppositional programme described by Ernesto Laclau.⁵²

On a more theoretical level, the political culture of *lok niti* predates the approaches and techniques behind movements like those adhering to the cause of anti-globalization, which emerged during the 1980s and 90s in common response to what Stephen Gill has termed disciplinary neoliberalism.⁵³ At the same time, it precedes recent efforts made within the arenas of philosophy and political theory to counter what has been described as the progressive denigration of the masses.⁵⁴ In recent years a lively discussion has evolved regarding the fears and anxieties generated by the emergence of mass politics

⁵¹ See Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude : For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Semiotext(e), 2004); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude : War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (London, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2006).

⁵² Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005).

⁵³ Stephen Gill, "Pessimism of the Intelligence, Optimism of the Will: Reflections on Political Agency in the Age of "Empire", in *Perspectives on Gramsci: Politics, Culture and Social Theory*, ed. Joseph Francese (New York: Routledge, 2009), 103. Gill defines disciplinary neoliberalism as a form of governance and a pattern of accumulation that is dominated by capital, particularly big capital, and exercised in detriment of subaltern groups or populations.

⁵⁴ Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 2-64.

since the early nineteenth century. Through the critical study of the foundational writings of mass psychology—especially the work of figures like Gustave Le Bon, Gabriel Tarde and Sigmund Freud—authors like Laclau, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have sought to disentangle the established link between mass politics and pathological behaviour, common to a tradition of intellectual history in which crowds are seen as the irrational, spontaneous and dangerous opposite of the autonomous, self-interested liberal subject. This reaction against the dismissal of collectives as valid political agents has engendered multiple responses, including the vindication of the multitude as a legitimate agent of sovereignty and social change found in the work of Hardt and Negri, and the appeal to recover the potentialities of what William Mazzarella, in a novel reading of the work of Elias Canetti, has referred to as the vital energies of human groups.⁵⁵ The moral emphasis on anti-statism, discipline and sacrifice—which the political culture of *lok niti* reads through the lens of Gandhian non-violence—can mislead us into branding it as a distant heir of the politics embodied in the early romantic socialism of a Fourier or a Saint-Simon. In this PhD project, however, I intend to examine the relationship between *lok niti* and political protest by positing that the former cannot be seen merely as an apolitical opposite of the latter, but rather as an example of what Hardt and Negri identify as the movements of resistance befitting a post-modern age,⁵⁶ in which the social and the political, the moral and the realist, the affective and the rational, are not easily disentangled.

In this sense *lok niti* must be seen as an early example of a particular set of political sensibilities that became widespread across different locations following the 1970s. This was a decade during which a new kind of politics emerged across the world, which was based on the increasingly open defence of concrete interests in detriment of traditional ideological projects. These emerging sensibilities have been associated with an increasing popular disenchantment with representative institutions and a perceived need to act politically beyond the

⁵⁵ William Mazzarella, "The Myth of the Multitude, or, Who's Afraid of the Crowd?," *Critical Inquiry* 36, no. 4 (2010).

⁵⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude : War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*.

bound of the state and established political parties. At the same time, the actions they promote do not adhere to a revolutionary programme in the traditional Marxist-Leninist sense. The groups inspired by such sensibilities include the Spanish Indignados and members of the Occupy Movement in the Euro-North American world, as well as the protesters involved in the Arab Spring uprisings, the 132 anti-election movement in Mexico and, in South Asia, movements like India Against Corruption and the mobilizations led by Anna Hazare. In this respect, I will recur to the literature on populism and antipolitics to develop an analytical framework for my study of *lok niti*. Since both antipolitics and populism are used commonly as pejorative labels and suffer from the flaw of being inherently polysemic, it is important to clarify why I find them relevant with regards to *lok niti*.

Firstly, a word on populism. Although it has been used in numerous ways in the literature of the social sciences since at least the 1960s, populism has often been defined, following the work of Edward Shils⁵⁷ and Seymour Lipset,⁵⁸ as a set of practices that emerge out of the deformation of normal democratic values and procedures typical of underdeveloped political systems. Peter Worsley gave expression to the main tenets of this widely shared view when he stated that populism is a style of politics that emerges out of the primacy given to the supremacy of the will of the people and the direct relationship between the people and the government.⁵⁹ In more recent times, and in response to the shifting practices of politics in Europe during the last decades, another perspective has been offered which sees populism as a response to the perceived shortcomings of democratic elitism in highly professionalized systems.⁶⁰ In a more theoretical dimension, Margaret Canovan has described

⁵⁷ Edward Albert Shils, *Torment of Secrecy: The Background and Consequences of American Security Policies* (Glenoce: Free Press, 1956).

⁵⁸ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1960).

⁵⁹ Peter Worsley, "The Concept of Populism," in *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, ed. G. Ionescu and E. Gellner (London: Weidenfelt and Nicholson, 1969), 244. For a discussion of this model in relation to Indian politics since 1947, see Narendra Subramaniam, "Populism in India," *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 27, no. 01 (2007).

⁶⁰ Jack Hayward, "The Populist Challenge to Elitist Democracies in Europe," in *Elitism, Populism and European Politics*, ed. Jack Hayward (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

populism as emerging from the gap created by the lack of correspondence between the redemptive promises of politics and the “grubby business” of its pragmatic practice.⁶¹ Given the wide range of definitions, Benjamin Arditi has suggested that one is “obliged to speak not of populism in general but of three modalities of populism with regards to modern democratic politics – as a mode of representation, as a symptom and as an under-side of democracy.”⁶²

In this project, I will follow the approach taken by Ernesto Laclau, according to which populism cannot be thought of in terms of a typology of political movements or styles of rhetoric, but rather must be seen as a *logic* used in the process of institution of the social. According to Laclau, given that any kind of institutional system is inevitably at least partially limiting and frustrating, every society develops “a reservoir of raw anti-status-quo feelings”⁶³ susceptible of being brought together through political discourses that serve the function of articulating opposing demands in what he refers to as a single chain of equivalence.⁶⁴ Put in different terms, anti-status-quo feelings in every society will generate varied complaints and practices to express discontent, which can in turn be integrated into a broad narrative in which different groups can identify themselves as coming together in a common project of protest and opposition. In this sense, populism designates the logic that emerges in response to the political energies released by anti-status-quo feelings. This logic is based on the articulation of heterogeneous social demands and the establishment of a frontier used to identify the other, or the enemy, and in the constitution of “the people” as a potential historical actor. The first step in this process, Laclau argues, must be the delimitation of a clear frontier that separates “the people” from power. Secondly, “the people” has to be defined in relation to an articulation of equivalent demands so as to allow for the development of significant political mobilization.⁶⁵ In other words, Laclau describes a political situation defined by the

⁶¹ Margaret Canovan, “Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy,” *Political Studies* 47, no. 01 (1999): 12.

⁶² Arditi, *Politics on the Edges of Liberalism. Difference, Populism, Revolution, Agitation*, 87.

⁶³ Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 123.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 74-128.

presentation of two mutually antagonistic blocs which are defined as not only incapable of attempting a reconciliation between them but, moreover, as theoretically helpless to even try. Political action, in this theory of populism, is not based on the search for consensus. Rather, it stems from the configuration and underscoring of a frontier of separation between sides that cannot be bridged. I will show that the wide repertoire of political practices that JP engaged in throughout his life and the political culture of *lok niti* he promoted were all defined by an adherence to this logic of populism. However, while it can be seen as sharing its oppositional and associative logic, *lok niti* differs fundamentally from populism described in this way in as much as it never defended the goal of taking power.

Even more than in the case of populism, the use of the term antipolitics is generally accompanied by confusion over its use. It can refer to heterogeneous phenomena, including lack of interest in politics, growing electoral disengagement, the success of right or left wing neo-populist parties, the actions of the so-called movement against globalization and diverse transformations of national political cultures. It has been argued that in general terms—and this will make the relevance of the term to the study of *lok niti* evident—antipolitics is made up of “critical discussions, attitudes and acts directed against political actors and institutions by different individuals who in a variety of roles form part of the political community.” In this sense, antipolitical “criticism particularly focuses on political parties and professional politicians, who are accused of being corrupt, inefficient, parasitic, incapable, arrogant, open to bribery and remote from people’s real needs.”⁶⁶

Andreas Schedler has identified two main “families” of antipolitical rhetoric: one that seeks to dethrone and banish politics altogether; another that pretends to colonize politics in order to infuse it with new meanings and values.⁶⁷ In his analysis, the first family promotes a position based on the assumed existence of an “organic, prepolitical community” that is continually “menaced, contaminated

⁶⁶ Vittorio Mete, “Four Types of Anti-Politics: Insights from the Italian Case,” *Modern Italy* 15, no. 1 (2010): 38-40.

⁶⁷ Andreas Schedler, “Introduction: Antipolitics—Closing and Colonizing the Public Sphere,” in *The End of Politics? Explorations into Modern Antipolitics*, ed. Andreas Schedler (London: Macmillan, 1997).

and subverted by politics". As a result, in the view this rhetoric promotes, politics appears as a "redundant (and) pernicious activity".⁶⁸ The second family is divided among different strands including those that aim at placing technocrats in charge of politics—labelled "instrumental antipolitics"—, those who see politics as a marketplace open to amoral commercial exchanges—"amoral antipolitics"—and those who strive for the creation of a kind of politics imbued with values that will replace the inherently corrupt system—"moral antipolitics."⁶⁹

As will become clear in the course of the following chapter, JP's *lok niti* cannot be neatly classified according to these categories of antipolitical rhetoric. However, I will show that, in different ways and at different times, JP's *lok niti* brought together the demand to suppress or minimize politics present in the first family described by Schedler with a concern for the role of morality in politics, which he referred to as the human side of politics. Thus, I will argue that *lok niti* can be described as a culture of antipolitics. Is it not, however, openly contradictory to talk of an antipolitical political culture? My use of antipolitics is even further problematized by the fact that JP, unlike Gandhi, never renounced the instrumental potential of politics.⁷⁰ Quite to the contrary Jayaprakash saw politics as "all pervasive". In his view "no one in modern society can be out of politics even if he wished to be. (...) Education is politics, health is politics and trade and commerce are politics. The very food we eat is politics."⁷¹ However, an exclusive focus on the politics of state and party institutions—the realm of *raj niti*—was in his view detrimental for the pursuit of the truly political, embodied by the ideal of *lok niti*. In order to conciliate my use of the concept of antipolitics with these apparent obstacles, I will take my cue from the recent work of scholars that have described antipolitics not as a rejection of politics, but rather as one of its most familiar and original expressions.⁷² Elena Alessiato, focusing on the case of

⁶⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 12-13.

⁷⁰ This argument is developed in Devji, "Morality in the Shadow of Politics."

⁷¹ Jayaprakash Narayan, letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 1 March 1957, in Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960) (Delhi: Manohar, 2005), 171-2.

⁷² Alfio Mastropaolo, *Is Democracy a Lost Cause? : Paradoxes of an Imperfect Invention* (Essex: ECPR Press.

Italy, has posed the possibility of thinking of antipolitics as a “particular political attitude” that exploits the “blind areas” and “shadows” of politics in an effort to transform its rules and dominant values.⁷³ In addition, Donatella Campus has suggested that antipolitics should be thought of as a discursive register structured around a simple logic of opposition and contrast between an inclusive “Us” and an antagonistic and negative “Them” in which the task of identification of the Them, or the enemy, gives meaning to antipolitics itself.⁷⁴

If we accept, at least provisionally, the possibility of thinking about antipolitical political cultures, the usefulness of the concept becomes apparent. In a very basic sense, *lok niti* can be seen as essentially antipolitical, in as much as it is based on a hostility towards a politics defined solely in terms of the artificial system of party power and impersonal bureaucratic organization. The importance to *lok niti* of arguments based on the contrast between institutional politics and the citizen and the people, as well as its defence of the idea that people external to political “power-machines” are automatically better in terms of morality, reliability and competence than those belonging to the party-apparatuses⁷⁵ mark *lok niti* as a form of antipolitics.

JP’s whole life, both private and public, was structured by his mutating political position and his promotion of the view that politics was an “all pervasive” element of social life. His concern, as has been argued above, was not with a rejection of politics, but with its regeneration. *Lok niti* was an expression of a protest not directed against politics, but against its denigration. In this sense, it represents a nationalist political culture defined by its openness to different and indeed contradictory ideological strands and modes of participation—including those branded as antipolitical. It is *populist* according to Laclau’s definition,

University of Essex, 2012); Barry Hindess, “Antipolitical Motifs in Western Political Discourse,” in *The End of Politics? Explorations into Modern Antipolitics*, ed. Andreas Schedler (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997); Elena Alessiato, “Antipolitics as Participation: Paradox and Challenges,” in *Challenges to Democratic Participation. Antipolitics, Deliberative Democracy and Pluralism*, ed. Andre Santos Campos and José Gomes André (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014).

⁷³ “Antipolitics as Participation: Paradox and Challenges.”

⁷⁴ Donatella Campus, *Antipolitics in Power. Populist Language as a Tool for Government* (Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press Inc., 2010).

⁷⁵ Alessiato, “Antipolitics as Participation: Paradox and Challenges,” 18-19.

anarchist in its conception of sovereignty and *moral* in its conception of power. In this sense, it is *revolutionary* in as much as it aims at the radical transformation of socio-political reality, and *conservative* in its concerns regarding its defence of the community and its opposition to social and economic programmes of modernization that implied the destruction of traditional structures of thought and collective action.

1.7 Chapter layout

The chapters in this dissertation are arranged in chronological order, and discuss the content and context of, as well as the responses to, JP's writings, communiqués, correspondence and political statements across a period of sixty years. The story told in this work opens up in 1917, with Gandhi's inaugural Champaran *satyagraha* in JP's home state of Bihar, and closes in 1977, the year of the electoral victory of the Janata Coalition.

In the second chapter I will lay the grounds for the development of my more general argument, according to which Jayaprakash Narayan must not be typecast merely as either a Gandhian, or a Socialist, but as the central figure in the origin and initial spread of the political culture of *lok niti*. As an introduction to the analysis of his thought and action, this chapter sets the scene of his appearance in the stage of anticolonial politics with a discussion of the ways in which revolutionary critiques of empire, the colonial state and predominant traditions of European political thought transformed the content and the form of nationalist politics in India between 1890 and 1920. Further, in this second chapter the idea is developed that JP's *lok niti* presented an attempt to redefine and adapt the radical, mobilization-based thrust of early XX Century nationalist politics, a heterogeneous set of practices that "promiscuously combined so many varied strains of political thought that a comprehensive list might read like a

Borges short story”⁷⁶, through an emphasis on the importance of civilization and the multitude.

The third chapter covers the beginning of JP’s political career as leader and organizer of the Congress Socialist Party (1929-1947). It focuses on analysing his theoretical and ideological contributions to debates on socialism and the need to radicalize nationalist in India along socialist lines. The chapter argues that, while JP’s political career was marked by his defence of the radical, mobilizational thrust of early XX century nationalist politics and his devotion to the event of Non-Cooperation, his idea of the good life and the virtuous social order obeyed the precepts of the framework of revolutionary socialism. Moreover, the second chapter explores JP’s early insistence on the importance of making politics meaningful and understandable to the masses of India, a trait that would become central to his later defence of *lok niti*. The chapter closes with a discussion of JP’s drift away from materialism and institutional politics towards the end of colonial rule, a process that, it will be argued in chapter 4, marked the beginning of his defence of the political culture of *lok niti*

Both chapters 4 and 5 cover the decades of 1950 and 1960 from different perspectives and following complementary approaches. Chapter 4 charts JP’s gradual drift away from Marxian socialism and party politics during the 1950s and 60s. This was a process that developed in parallel to his reconciliation with Gandhi’s thought, his growing involvement with constructive social work, and his embrace of the ideal of *Sarvodaya*. These were years during which JP began openly articulating his political thought and praxis through the ideal of *lok niti*, which developed and took shape as a result of his opposition and protest against the increasing bureaucratization and institutionalization of politics that marked the Nehruvian period. In this chapter, I will approach JP’s effort to reconcile Gandhi and Marx through the framework developed by the philosopher Akeel Bilgrami, according to which the Mahatma and the author of *Capital* were united, despite their many differences, in a common defence of the ideal of an unalienated life.

⁷⁶ Kama Maclean and J. Daniel Elam, "Reading Revolutionaries: Texts, Acts, and Afterlives of Political Action in Late Colonial South Asia. Who Is a Revolutionary?," *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 2 (2013): 114.

Lastly, I posit that, during these years, *lok niti* became a programme through which JP sought to redefine and extend the goals of socialism according to the needs of independent India

Chapter 5 extends and complements the analysis of the fourth chapter by putting forth the idea that during the two decades following independence a battle for the appropriation and definition of the goals and meanings of socialism took place in India. This chapter extends the scope of the analysis beyond the work and thought of JP to argue that socialism during these decades was wielded in defence of programmes of government *as well as* opposition. With this aim in mind JP's conception of socialism—which, during the 1950s and 60s became increasingly entwined with the oppositional programme of *lok niti*—is contrasted to the position developed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Rammanohar Lohia, two of his oldest friends and interlocutors. Through an exercise of contrast between these differing positions, JP's *lok niti* is revealed to be highly problematic when applied to the act of governing or party-building but greatly powerful as a programme of opposition and protest in the context of postcolonial Indian democracy.

Chapter 6 looks at JP's leadership during the 1970s, both before and after the declared state of Emergency. I posit that his role during this period signals both the culmination of his personal life-long devotion to protest, as well as the high point of the political culture of *lok niti*. In this final chapter, it is argued that JP conceived of the unrest of the early 1970s as an opportunity to re-enact the authentic and emancipatory essence of Indian politics, which emerged out of the thrust of early XX century radical nationalism. Moreover, the chapter rounds up the analysis of the populist and antipolitical nature of *lok niti* by looking at the ways in which JP's leadership interacted with the objectives of the groups and leaders rallied around the cry of *Indira Hatao*. Seen in this light, JP's *lok niti* reached its culmination in the 1970s in the promotion of the hazy programme of Total Revolution, which would be integrated into an agenda tinged by the much-decried shortcomings and vices of *raj niti*.

2. The Coming of JP: *Swadeshi*, Non-Cooperation and the origins of *lok niti*

Gandhiji was not a party leader fighting and manoeuvring for power for his party. Had it been so it could never have occurred to him to ask the Congress to quit the field of power politics. He was a national leader fighting for the freedom of his country: nay, he was a world leader of humanity working to free his fellow men from bondage. The Indian freedom movement was a people's movement par excellence. It was not rajniti but lokniti.
Jayaprakash Narayan, *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, 1957.⁷⁷

In this chapter I will lay the grounds for the development of the broader argument of this dissertation according to which Jayaprakash Narayan must not be typecast merely as either a Gandhian, or a socialist, but as the central figure in the origin spread of the political culture of protest of *lok niti*. The general objective of this chapter is to suggest that JP's defence of the political culture of *lok niti* must be seen as an attempt to carry on with the politics of radical Indian anticolonial nationalism developed during the opening decades of the XX century in India. The years stretching from the beginning of the *swadeshi* movement to the culmination of the Non-Cooperation movement, the period of Jayaprakash's coming to age, were marked by the eruption of set of practices and ideas that distinguished early XX century radical nationalism in India from earlier forms of politics, and which would later be adapted and taken forward as part of the political culture of *lok niti*.

In this chapter, these practices and ideas will be grouped and analysed in three broad and interrelated fields. Firstly, during this period a conception of politics developed which was fundamentally anti-statist and, as a result, marked by a strong emphasis on direct action, popular association, cooperation and duty. In second place, the politics of nationalism of these years were marked by a rejection of Western forms of government and social organization; this included a rejection of "modern civilization", and was complemented by the extolment of the virtues of Indian civilization, a construct that took different shapes but generally emphasised the importance of moral virtue. Finally, the politics of this period

⁷⁷ In Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 244.

were defined by the teleology of *swaraj*, a project that included the prospect of political self-determination in a Wilsonian sense but also, and more importantly, the prospect of the attainment of autonomy of the individual and the society in the face of power. In this chapter, I will approach these processes to argue that they account for the source of the basic populist logic and anti-political stances of the political culture of *lok niti* in later years.

The first section of this chapter will argue that JP's life-long involvement in politics was defined by his perception of and participation in the Non-Cooperation Movement led by Gandhi between 1919-1921. This fact is important not only in relation to JP's biography. It is also relevant inasmuch as JP's defence and promotion of the political culture of *lok niti* was meant to bring about the renovation of the demands, techniques and teleological assumptions that defined the politics of radical nationalism in India in the opening decades of the XX century.

In the second and third sections, I will outline the contours and contents of the politics of radical nationalism during the early decades of the XX century in India through the analysis of two separate but interrelated processes. On the one hand, I will show that this period witnessed the consolidation of a mobilization-based and anti-statist practice of politics that brought diverse trends of communitarian thought—which during these years began to present nationalist politics in terms of the action of the masses, the millions, the people, the labour and the proletariat of India—together in opposition to the colonial state. I will posit that this process propitiated the emergence of the possibility of thinking of a national multitude as the basis for a politics of protest. In the final section, I will discuss the formation and popularization of a political teleology shaped by the objective of *swaraj*, which was interpreted both in terms of national self-determination *and* as a philosophical ideal of civilizational autonomy.

2.1 The birth of JP's political devotion

On 10 April 1917, M. K. Gandhi arrived in Patna, to where he had been invited by a group of young Bihari advocates interested in looking into the conditions of the relationship between planters and *ryots* in North Bihar. On his arrival, Gandhi was welcomed by the young Rajendra Prasad and Braj Kishore Prasad—the father of a young girl by the name of Prabhavati, whom the young Jayaprakash Narayan would marry two years later—both of whom had been interested in inviting Gandhi to Bihar since early 1916.⁷⁸ As the latter was unacquainted with the local Bhojpuri dialect, both hosts volunteered to help him and stay with him throughout his stay.⁷⁹ After declaring his intention to head out to the villages and carry out his enquiries, Gandhi was ordered by the collector W. B. Heycock to abandon the district, on the grounds that his presence was a threat to public order.⁸⁰ Gandhi refused to obey and subsequently pleaded guilty at a court hearing declaring that civil disobedience was the only course of action open to him in accordance with his conception of duty. Heycock was soon after ordered to suspend the proceedings,⁸¹ a vacillation that was exploited by Gandhi to carry out a broad enquiry. The event generated a considerable amount of publicity of the figure of Gandhi, as the man who had stood up to the colonial government and forced it to recant its own decision. His prestige and fame spread rapidly through the region where he would be acclaimed by “throngs of peasants (gathered) at each station between Muzaffarpur and Motihari.”⁸² Shortly after, mass demonstrations and scattered cases of arson forced the government to institute an official Committee of Enquiry, on which Gandhi was to act as the representative of the *ryots*. The episode, which would come to be known as the Champaran *satyagraha* and seen as a critical moment of the freedom struggle by nationalist historiography, was the first mass movement in which Gandhi was

⁷⁸ See ‘Bihar Intelligence Report’, 4 March 1916, in B. B. Misra and Aditya Prasad Jha, *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran, 1917-18* (Govt. of Bihar, 1963).

⁷⁹ Jacques Pouchepadass, *Champaran and Gandhi : Planters, Peasants, and Gandhian Politics* (New Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 168-9.

⁸⁰ W.B. Heycock, District Magistrate, to M. K. Gandhi, 16 April 1917, in Misra and Jha, *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran, 1917-18*, 62.

⁸¹ H. McPherson, Chief Secretary to Government of Bihar and Orissa, to L. F. Morsehead, Commissioner, Tirhut Division, *ibid.*, 75-6.

⁸² Pouchepadass, *Champaran and Gandhi : Planters, Peasants, and Gandhian Politics*, 171.

involved after his return to India in 1915. At the same time, it represented one of the first instances in which members of the regional elite of Bihar participated in an act of civil disobedience. Gandhi's companions and helpers during his visit to Champaran—among which figured both JP's future father-in-law and one of his political mentors—would go on to become spearhead figures of the Non-Cooperation movement in Bihar, and direct references for the young Jayaprakash.

In 1919 Gandhi, now in his definitive guise as Mahatma, placed himself at the lead of the Non-Cooperation Movement. The agitation took forward the projects of non-violent resistance and boycott developed during the early years of the twentieth century bringing the culmination of the political cycle initiated with the *swadeshi* movement. The actions of the movement aimed at a radical rejection and disabling of the colonial state through the resignation of honorary titles and posts in the civil service, the non-violent unwillingness to participate in state institutions—notably colleges, schools and courts of law—and the complete refusal to pay taxes. In a letter to the students of Aligarh College written in October 1920, Gandhi declared that the finality of Non-cooperation was to “bend the Government's to the people's will”.⁸³ In this letter, he developed an argument of revolutionary action that exalted the road of purification through sacrifice and, in a manner reminiscent of his 1909 tract *Hind Swaraj*, attacked the colonial state by describing it as a product of the satanic modern civilization. In this sense, Gandhi conceived of Non-Cooperation as a possible “remedy” for uniting the two halves of India—of which “one (was) too weak to offer a violent resistance and the other (was) unwilling to do so”— and enabling “those who wish(ed) to dissociate themselves from the Government and (...) undo the wrongs committed.”⁸⁴ By referring to India's “two halves” Gandhi was echoing the concern expressed by certain sectors of Indian liberal nationalists, which since the turn of the XX century had emphasised the need to unite the elite and the masses of India in a common front of opposition against the rule of the colonial

⁸³ Mahatma Gandhi, “Advice to Aligarh Students,” *Young India*, 27 October 1920.

⁸⁴ *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. XVIII (Ahmedabad: The Publications Division, Government of India, 1965), 106.

state. Non-cooperation was a solution to the problematic lack of oppositional unity among nationalist forces, epitomized by the Surat split of the Congress in 1906, as well as a way of adapting the need of revolution to Indian conditions and taking forward a particular conception of *swaraj* based on autonomy rather than political independence.

2.1.1 Bihar, 1921: The young JP and the event Non-Cooperation

One of the provinces in which the programme of Non-Cooperation was most heartily welcomed was Bihar, where the boycott of teaching institutions and the state was taken over with particular zeal by students. Bihar had remained in the periphery of the anticolonial nationalist fervour experienced during the turn of the twentieth century in provinces like Bengal or Punjab. Despite this, in the years prior to the Non-Cooperation movement, the region would be the first testing ground for M. K. Gandhi's programme of civil disobedience as well as the stage to the process of development of the myth of the Mahatma.

As the first region where urban civilization evolved following the decline of the cities of the Indus Valley, Bihar has occupied a place of great economic, demographic and symbolic importance in the history of the subcontinent. Following its annexation to the Mughal Empire in the late sixteenth century, Bihar became a link between Hindustan and the rich lands of Bengal. In the following centuries, the cities of Patna and Gaya were gradually linked to the most important urban centres of North India through an important network of roads. By the beginning of the Raj, Patna had emerged as an important centre of economic and political power, and its surrounding regions were a prosperous and relatively stable part of the subcontinent. However, despite the growing commercial importance of Patna since the beginning of the seventeenth century, the city never equalled the cultural and artistic vitality and splendour of places like Lucknow or Delhi. During the nineteenth century, the important social changes that contact with the West brought to urban centres like Calcutta and Bombay did not affect the city of Patna in the same way. As a result, a nationalist native

intelligentsia was late to emerge. Likewise, having passed into the control of the East India Company as early as 1763, Bihar did not profit from the advantages of late conquest and relative political autonomy enjoyed by regions like Maharashtra and Punjab. In colonial Bihar, agricultural production emerged as the most important avenue of economic growth and wealth accumulation; much of the small Bihari urban middle-class during the nineteenth century was tied to landed and *zamindari* interests, and remained distant from the intellectual and political effervescence taking place in the neighbouring city of Calcutta. The particular importance of land-related interests and grievances would be central to the development of politics and political thought in Bihar during the first decades of the XX Century. On the one hand, it would fuel the emergence of peasant leaders, like Swami Sahajanand, and contribute to the importance of peasant organizations, or *kisan sabhas*. On the other, the problem of land would be tackled in the programme of left-wing forces in the state after the 1920s, most notably the JP-led Congress Socialist Party, which, as we will see in the next chapter, emphasised the urgent need for land reform as one of its main objectives. Indeed, the problem of land would remain central to Jayaprakash's thought until the 1960s when, as a leading member of the *Bhoodan* movement, he would advocate for the voluntary transference of land from *zamindars* to landless peasants.

Social conservatism and a strong regionalism went hand in hand during the turn of the twentieth century in the region. During the nineteenth century, very few Biharis proved enthusiastic about English education and, by the turn of the twentieth, less than 800 students, out of a total population of about twenty million, were enrolled in the six colleges functioning in the region.⁸⁵ Following the start of the *swadeshi* movement in 1905, political leaders of Bihar consciously distanced themselves from it in an effort to exert pressure on the colonial administration in favour of the cause of regional autonomy, a concern of regional elites ever since

⁸⁵ Lata Singh, *Popular Translations of Nationalism: Bihar 1920-1922* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2012), 9.

1870.⁸⁶ The eventual separation of Bihar and Orissa from the Bengal province, announced in the Delhi Durbar of 1911 and effected the following year, further inhibited the spread of the militant politics of *swadeshi*. The presence of the Congress by the late 1910s was also negligible. Indeed, when Gandhi visited the region of Champaran in 1917, he found “the Congress (was) practically unknown” in Bihar.⁸⁷ As a result, Bihar remained in the periphery of the anticolonial nationalist fervour experienced during the turn of the twentieth century in provinces like Bengal or Punjab.

However, despite the relative absence of anticolonial agitations in Bihar before the unfolding of the Champaran *satyagraha*, the widespread unrest of 1919-1921 was a defining moment for an entire generation of Bihari students, among whom figured the young Jayaprakash Narayan. On April 4 1919 nearly 10,000 people gathered at a mass meeting headed by Rajendra Prasad and other local leaders in Patna, in which it was agreed to carry out a *hartal* on 6 April to protest against the establishment of the Rowlatt Act, passed in March of that same year by the Imperial Legislative Council in London, and in virtue of which the emergency measures designed during the First World War to control protest and uproot conspiracy in British India were extended indefinitely. On that day, almost all shops in the city remained closed, and business of all kinds was suspended.⁸⁸ It was reported that most of the students in Patna were present at the massive gatherings that took place during that day, along with large contingents of visitors from the rural areas.⁸⁹ Although it is impossible to account for his presence that day, it is more than likely that Jayaprakash, who was by that time 17 years old and already on his second year of studies at Patna College, was among the protesters that day. He had moved to Patna from Sitabdiara village in 1914, and had since then stayed at the students’ hostel known as Saraswati Bhawan, an important centre of political and nationalist activities

⁸⁶ Ibid., 10-11.

⁸⁷ Mahatma Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Press, 1927), 411.

⁸⁸ Singh, *Popular Translations of Nationalism: Bihar 1920-1922*, 13.

⁸⁹ *Searchlight*, 10 April 1919

where important figures like Rajendra Prasad and Sri Krishna Sinha, the first Chief Minister of Bihar, had lived during the early years of the XX century.⁹⁰

Despite Gandhi's growing fame in the region following the Champaran *satyagraha*, the impact of the Non-Cooperation movement was gradual in Bihar; during 1919 and 1920 the initiative to boycott state institutions and economic activities was very modestly taken over in the region. However, this would change following the Mahatma's visit to Patna in December 1920, during which he addressed massive public meetings and met large groups of students.⁹¹ In this case, we can be certain that JP was among those who witnessed Gandhi's address, which laid great emphasis on the boycott of colleges and schools and succeeded in greatly enthusing young students. In the 1960s, the old JP would recall the large meeting gathered before Gandhi as an inspiring example of popular fervour and political mobilization.⁹² JP would relate to his biographers the way in which, not long after that day and upon hearing the news of the infamous Jallianwalla Bagh massacre that took place in Amritsar on April 13, he threw his books into a dam and renounced the possibility of an English education with the conviction of joining the nationalist agitation.⁹³

As a young man, Jayaprakash took part in the nationalist excitement, agitation and mobilization of students that spread across India between 1919-1921. In his unfinished biography, he remembers joining a large group of students the day following Gandhi's speech and marching along the streets to the residence of Rajendra Prasad, who received them "with tears in his eyes at seeing so many young men and their sacrifice."⁹⁴ It is highly significant that throughout his life Jayaprakash Narayan would consistently look refer to the Non-Cooperation Movement as "the most glorious page in the living History of

⁹⁰ D. K. Bajwa, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan and Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1987), 30-31.

⁹¹ *Searchlight*, 15, 17 and 19 December 1919.

⁹² Jayaprakash Narayan, Oral History Interview with Arun Gandhi, March 1965. University of Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies Archive, Oral History Collection.

⁹³ Allan and Wendy Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1975), 44.

⁹⁴ Jayaprakash Narayan, "Jp's Unfinished Biography," in *Unfinished Revolution. A Political Biography of Jayaprakash Narayan*, ed. Ajit Bhattacharjea (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2004), 315-16.

(India's) National Revolution"⁹⁵ and the moment of birth of what he considered as the only valid and truly Indian tradition of politics.

Likewise, and as part of this devotion to the event of Non-Cooperation, he would also emphasize the importance of the political involvement of students as an integral part of his vision of social transformation. His fidelity to Non-cooperation would survive the disintegration of the colonial state, and would inspire his opposition to the independent national state. In 1953, he promoted the *Bhoodan* movement before a gathering of students in the following terms:

We are living in stirring times comparable to 1921. Revolution is afoot. Let us play our due parts in it. Let us prepare ourselves for it. I want you all to give up your studies; go and wander about in the villages and make what contributions you can, to the *Bhoodan* Movement and try to make this revolution a success.⁹⁶

In December 1966, addressing another rally of students at Delhi University, JP made clear the importance he attached to his involvement in the Non-cooperation movement and to its principles of self-sacrifice:

The students (today) experience no involvement in the gigantic tasks of national reconstruction and do not feel the challenge that they offer. This was not so in the days of the Freedom movement. The convulsions through which the student community passed then were precisely those that the struggle for freedom set in motion. At this point my mind goes back 46 years to a memorable day in January 1921, when at a vast concourse of men in Patna, I listened enthralled to a stormy petrel of the Non-Cooperation movement, who though young in years had magic on his tongue. His name quite appropriately was Abul Kalam Azad. Incidentally, at the same place there was also held in a corner an overflow meeting—there were no loud-speakers then—addressed by another young man, about whom all that was known was that he was the upcoming son of the great Pandit Motilal Nehru. It was the fiery words of the 'father of speech', however, that had set fire to the waters of the Ganga that flowed placidly by. The dawn saw scores of students from the colleges of Patna march together to the residence of the idol of Bihar's student community, Rajen Babu. As he stood before the students who had gone to lay down their lives at his feet he was speechless and tears rolled down his cheeks. To be alive in that dawn was truly heaven.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ To Students, 1943, Jayaprakash Narayan Papers (hereafter JP Papers), Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML).

⁹⁶ Address to Students at the Youth Conference, Chandil (Bihar), 8 March 1953, Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954) (Delhi: Manohar, 2005), 325.

⁹⁷ Convocation Address at Delhi University, 23 December 1966, JP Papers, NMML.

Born in 1902, JP is, both symbolically and chronologically, a product of the *swadeshi* years. In this work I will approach him both as the most lasting heir and greatest transformer of the legacy of early twentieth century revolutionary political thought and action in India, as well as the most important figure in the evolution of *lok niti* practice throughout the twentieth century. Geographically, he came from a region at the periphery of *swadeshi* agitation, most powerful in the Punjab, the United Provinces and Bengal. Born into a family of relatively poor country *kayasthas*, JP had to secure a government scholarship in order to pursue his studies at Patna College. When he threw his books into the bonfire of Non-cooperation, he was not following a liberal political commitment or taking a radical anarchist stance. Being a non-elite revolutionary, the prospect of *swaraj* for JP was tinged by the anxiety generated by the possibility of failure. In this sense, the prospect of revolution held a special urgency for him, having as he had rejected the chance of a government education, and being unable to afford an English upbringing, like the one many of the most important leaders of the Congress had pursued.

For JP, Non-cooperation marked not only a point of rupture after which the radical tradition of early XX century nationalist politics was incorporated into the mainstream of massive anti-colonialism, but also, and most importantly, it was the beginning of his own career marked by a devotion to political emancipation and idealism. Nearly thirty years later, JP would vividly describe the transformative effects of Non Cooperation in one of his most famous and personal texts:

The past course of my life might well appear to the outsider as a zigzag and tortuous chart of unsteadiness and blind groping. But as I look back, I discern in it a uniform line of development. The groping undeniably was there, but it was certainly not blind (...). As a boy, like most boys of those days, I was an ardent nationalist and leaned towards the revolutionary cult of which Bengal was the noble leader at that time. But even then the story of the South African *satyagraha* had fascinated my young heart. Before my revolutionary leanings could mature, Gandhiji's first non-cooperation movement swept over the land as a strangely uplifting hurricane. I, too, was one of the thousands of young men of those days, who, like leaves in the storm, were swept away and momentarily lifted up to the skies. That brief

experience of soaring up with the winds of a great idea left imprints on the inner being that time and much familiarity with ugliness of reality have not removed.⁹⁸

By reading the emotional and intimate tone with which JP narrated his initial involvement with Non-Cooperation and the important impact it had on him, both politically as well as intimately, it is clear that the movement represented an experiential threshold that inaugurated and defined JP's involvement with movements of opposition against the abuses of power politics and the state and politics more broadly. In other words, it could be said that Non-cooperation marked the event that generated JP's political subjectivity.⁹⁹ From that moment on and throughout his life, JP would be devoted to a politics of opposition that he would gradually codify through the logic of *lok niti*. In his view, Non-cooperation was a life-long symbolic reference regarding the core and origin of the only valid tradition of politics in India, which he saw as the result of the conjunction of the anti-statism, the defence of the civilization of India and the promotion of voluntarism and non-violent self-sacrifice unfolded during the first two decades of the XX century.

But it was not only the experience of Non-Cooperation that was important for JP. Moreover for JP's generation Non-Cooperation demonstrated the transformational potential of the ideas and tenets central to two interrelated processes of change in the content and direction of political thought and action developed in India during the opening decades of the XX century. These processes relate, on the one hand, to the emergent acceptance among a group of turn of the XX century communitarian-minded nationalists of a conception of national society marked by a turn towards the masses and the possibility of a "national multitude", marked by its opposition to the colonial state. On the other, to the development of an emancipatory thrust, based on the acknowledgement and celebration of the civilizational heritage of India and marked by the

⁹⁸ Jayaprakash Narayan, *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, 25 October 1957, in Prasad, *Jayprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, Vol. VII, 228-9.

⁹⁹ It is possible to state that Non-Cooperation represented, for JP, an event of truth following the theory of subjectivity posed by Alain Badiou, *Being and Event* (London: Continuum, 2005). These events are defined by Badiou as irruptions of radical newness that exert powerful and lasting effects on those who experience them and, thereafter, define their subjectivity. Those who are exposed to such events are turned into militants of the truth revealed by them.

predominance of morality over politics. The assumptions and possibilities inherent in both processes would be crucial in moulding JP's conception of politics and his later defence of *lok niti*. The following section will develop an analysis of these ideas.

2.2 Before Non-Cooperation: The radicalism of early XX nationalist politics in India

In this section I will focus on the ways in which the conception of society that spread among certain circles of communitarian-minded liberals and nationalists in India during the early decades of the XX century, was motivated by an interest to mobilize a collective of inherently plural groups under the banner of a common anti-elitist and anti-statist practice of protest. At its core, the challenge of early XX century radical nationalism involved a conceptual rejection of the centrality of the state regarding sovereignty and authority in Western canonical thinking.¹⁰⁰ This rejection generated a positive offshoot in the crystallisation of a political imaginary of opposition aimed at the obtainment of autonomy as the prerequisite for freedom, and was based on notions of voluntarism, discipline and sacrifice rather than institutional and representative democracy. This imaginary rested on a set of assumptions about Indian civilization regarding the righteousness of the masses, the centrality of village life and the predominant unity of the subcontinent's diversity. Likewise, I will argue that this core set of assumptions was to become the touchstone for the development of the repertoire of *lok niti* politics of Jayaprakash Narayan after the 1950s.

Further, in this section I posit that it is possible to account for the lasting influence of post-*swadeshi* political radicalism on *lok niti* through an exploration of the use of early twentieth century constructs of Indian civilization. Lastly, I want to argue that by contrasting such constructs with the assumptions behind the more recent concept of the multitude, we can account both for the potency of *lok niti* and its limitations, its potential for mobilization and its shortages when it

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of this and in relation to nationalist readings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, see: Kapila and Devji, *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*.

comes to dealing with the act of governing, its overarching thrust and its inescapable provincialism.

In the following subsections I am interested in posing that the oppositional core of JP's political thought, later codified in the political culture of *lok niti*, irradiated from the tenets and practice of early twentieth century radical anticolonial nationalism. With this aim in mind, I want to put forward two separate arguments. Firstly, I will pose that, during the years prior to Non-Cooperation, a new framework for political mobilization and protest evolved which wielded a conception of political unity closely related what has in recent years been identified as the multitude as the basis for sovereignty. In contrast to the community-based techniques of politics of the late nineteenth century, this national multitude relied on an opposition to the state and its institutions to rally varied groups around the increasingly combative demands for *swaraj* that emerged after 1905. Secondly, I will argue that this post-*swadeshi* national multitude did not appeal to a definite community—a technique that during the early years of the XX century began to be bemoaned as a biting of the hook of the colonizer's divide and rule feint—but rather drew upon the importance of a common Indian civilization as a way of integrating the self-perceived *deshmukhs* of the educated leading classes, and the millions or masses of India in defence of an anti-statist rejection of the perceived despotism of the colonial regime. This construct of Indian civilization was based not on a common historical development or cultural heritage but as the crystallisation of a common adherence to a moral conduct that was contrasted to the corrupt and immoral craft of statehood.

2.2.1. The Masses of India and the Anti-Statist Politics of *Swadeshi*

Along with the widespread thrust of anticolonial mobilization and protest developed during the first decades of the twentieth century, a new rhetoric of subversion and revolt was generated among radical anticolonial nationalist circles which aimed at encouraging massive widespread uprising in rejection of

the institutions and workings of the colonial state. The rejection of the mendicant and moderate politics of the Congress and earlier nationalists¹⁰¹ was complemented by what has been described as a turn towards an inner domain of cultural autonomy during the turn of the XX Century¹⁰², in a process that led to the consolidation of what began to be identified as the *swadeshi* movement. The word itself became common among radical nationalist circles in India during the early years of the XX century to refer to the growth of a revolutionary consciousness among the masses of India.¹⁰³

The wide scope of techniques followed during the time, ranging from the passive resistance to open terrorist activities directed against individuals and symbols of colonial authority, converged around the rejection of the state and the reliance on oppositional politics based on the potency of the masses. In the domain of the economy, *swadeshi* nationalists promoted the boycott of foreign, and especially British products, and the development of indigenous and local industries. Great emphasis was laid upon the importance of a non-Western, and thus truly Indian, systems of administration and education, and on mass organization in the form of labour unions and various revolutionary associations or *samitis*. Crucially, these techniques were formulated in opposition to the realm of the state, seen as the source of the poverty and humiliation of Indian society.

The *swadeshi* movement was seen by early XX century nationalists as the “real awakening” of Indian anti-colonial nationalism¹⁰⁴, and as an important step on the road to self-rule. However, historians have pointed towards the important limitations of the movement, especially regarding the inability of its middle-class, urban leadership to translate their economic and political interests into a successful agrarian programme of action¹⁰⁵, and the emphasis on coercion rather

¹⁰¹ Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908* ([New Delhi]: People's Publishing House, 1973).

¹⁰² Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹⁰³ See, for example, G. Subramania Iyer, "The Swadeshi Movement--a Natural Development," *The Modern Review*, February 1907.

¹⁰⁴ M. K. Gandhi and Anthony Parel (ed.) *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19.

¹⁰⁵ Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908*.

than consent in its strategies of agglutination.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, recent analysis has identified the *swadeshi* years as a period of consolidation of an elitist tradition of leftist political leadership¹⁰⁷, and of a nativist vision of nationhood that would later be used in the construction of the ideological programme and political project of Hindu nationalism.¹⁰⁸

In this section, I am interested in approaching the *swadeshi* movement not with a mind to dissect its ambiguities as a stage in the history of nationalism in India. Rather I am interested in highlighting the importance of the anti-statist and populist trends developed during the *swadeshi* movement as a way of framing the origins of JP's political devotion, as well as of his political principles. In this sense, it is important to emphasize the ways in which the rejection of the state typical of *swadeshi* politics generated an equivalent productive counter current around the coalescence of what was referred to alternatively as the masses, the community, the people and the millions of India by communitarian-minded liberals during the turn of the twentieth century. In the words of Bipin Chandra Pal, one of its key thinkers and agitators, *swadeshi* politics could only be rendered effective through a focus on "association, not isolation; cooperation, not competition; (...) duty and not right."¹⁰⁹ This conception of politics marked by association, cooperation and duty, reminiscent of the thrust of early socialism, must be seen as the core of early XX century radical nationalism, as well as its most fruitful legacy.

At the same time, for the purpose of this dissertation it is important to emphasize that the *swadeshi* movement opened up a space for a new kind of politics of protest which could go beyond the established forms of elite political participation that, during the later half of the nineteenth century, had been aimed at the gradual expansion of the political and social liberties of its members and driven by a "desire to re-empower India's people with personal freedom in the

¹⁰⁶ Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony. History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁷ Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution : New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*.

¹⁰⁸ Manu Goswami, *Producing India : From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago, Ill. ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁹ Bipin Chandra Pal, *Nationality and Empire: A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problem* (Calcutta and Shimla: Thacker & Spink, 1916), 86.

face of the despotic government of foreigners.”¹¹⁰ The main goal of politics during the was the creation of new spaces of influence for Indians in public life and within the structures of the colonial state. In the decades following 1850, Indian thinkers moulded a powerful critique of Empire by reverting the arguments of classical European political economy, and placing the responsibility for the poverty of India on the lack of economic and trade regulations imposed by the colonial state. The force and impact of such economic critiques was such that, by the 1890s, these were a central standard component of nationalist thought and political discourse in India. The most notorious formulation of this early economic nationalism can be found in the work of Dadabhai Naoroji, who during the 1870s developed what came to be known as the “Drain of Wealth” theory to which later nationalists of the most diverse inclinations would subscribe.¹¹¹

Even though the issue of poverty during the following years became one of “the biggest stick with which (to) beat the British”,¹¹² this significant concern with poverty in the work of Naoroji and other contemporary liberal thinkers was not accompanied by a correspondent concern with the poor. Poverty was seen not as the sign of wide spread social injustice, but rather of the humiliation and powerlessness of the elites that made up the higher echelons of the nationalist movement and, after 1885, the Indian National Congress. These late nineteenth century Indian liberals took their tutelage over the body of society for granted and were unconcerned with issues of mass poverty and untouchability. Despite not being overly concerned with conflicts arising from social hierarchies, the self-perception of these liberals as *deshmukhs*—or spokesmen to the country—contributed to the development of what C. A. Bayly has referred to as integralist conceptions of Indian society, which during the first decade of the twentieth

¹¹⁰ Bayly, *Recovering Liberties : Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire : The Wiles Lectures Given at the Queen's University of Belfast, 2007*, 1.

¹¹¹ Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty of India* (London: Printed by V. Brooks, Day, 1878).

¹¹² Sanjay Seth, "Rewriting Histories of Nationalism. The Politics of "Moderate Nationalism" in India, 1870-1905," in *Nationalist Movement in India. A Reader*, ed. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 35.

century began to be thought of as a unity opposed to the despotic rule of the colonial state.¹¹³ In the words of the theosophist B. P. Wadia:

The movement of the masses is being ensured by the educated classes moving among them, speaking their tongue, sympathising with their poverty and misery and learning from them simple but deep truths of a spiritual nature. A kind of yoga between the intellect of India and the labour of India is being attained, a union fraught with promise, the first step of the fulfilment thereof being in our political emancipation (sic.).¹¹⁴

This yoga between the intellect and labour was seen simultaneously as an awakening of the masses and the result of the growing sensibility of the elites. Thus, Lajpat Rai declared that:

The mutiny (of 1857) failed because the people on the whole had no faith in the constructive capacity of the mutineers. (...) (The people) hated the British(...). (But) (t)he ruling families of India, the aristocracy and the nobility, were perhaps more dreaded and hated by the people than were the British. There was no one to rally them to one standard.¹¹⁵

These integralist conceptions of society built on earlier denunciations of the state-caused poverty of India and incorporated ideas of social organicism such as those of Herbert Spencer, whose opposition to the state was incorporated into the anti-imperialist doctrines of radical nationalists such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Har Dayal.¹¹⁶ Apart from hierarchical articulations of social organicism, more broad and popular strands of communitarianism developed during the turn of the twentieth century. Probably the most relevant sign of this process can be found in the growth of the use of the goddess, or Bharat Mata, as a symbol of radical anticolonial politics from the 1880s onwards. In a pamphlet written by Aurobindo and confiscated by the colonial authorities in 1905, the goddess or *Bhawani* is referred to as the "Infinite Energy(.) which streams forth

¹¹³ See Bayly, *Recovering Liberties : Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire : The Wiles Lectures Given at the Queen's University of Belfast, 2007*, 245-75.

¹¹⁴ B. P. Wadia, "The Wider Swadeshi Movement," (Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917), 10.

¹¹⁵ Lala Lajpat Rai, *Young India: An Interpretation of the Nationalist Movement from Within* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1916), 101-02.

¹¹⁶ For a study of different nationalist interpretations of the work of Herbert Spencer during the turn of the XX Century, see Shruti Kapila, "Self, Spencer and Swaraj: Nationalist Thought and Critiques of Liberalism, 1890-1920," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 01 (2007).

from the Eternal and sets the wheel to work.”¹¹⁷ Conceived in terms of an all-encompassing, shared vital energy, *Bhawani* is also described as the *shakti* of the millions of India, the masses that constituted the real agent of political change. In the face of this community of power, the individual became irrelevant. Aurobindo’s appeal to the involvement of the masses aimed at the regeneration of the society of India in the face of the despotic and vampire-like colonial power. Just as Naoroji had exposed the economic “drain” of India as the result of statist practices, Aurobindo bitterly complained about the drain of the social energy from the society as a result of the humiliation of foreign domination.

The mounting critique of the exploitative and discriminatory workings of the state was extended during the final years of the nineteenth century to include a rejection of those sectors of Indian society openly collaborating with the colonial authorities. This process was marked by a radical indictment of parliamentary methods of nationalist politics, such as those espoused by the Indian National Congress—the senior members of which began to be referred to in the new parlance of *swadeshi* politics as “moderates” and advocates of a “mendicant” nationalism—and the emergence of the radical demand for total independence from colonial rule. In a series of articles entitled *New Lamps for Old*, published between 1893 and 1894, Aurobindo Ghose harshly criticised the older members of the Congress, and declared that their tendency to act too much “like lawyers”¹¹⁸ rendered them incapable of representing “the Indian people in its entirety” and of leading “the proletariat” out of its ignorance and distress.¹¹⁹ With the upsurge brought about by the thrust of *swadeshi* politics, a novel rhetoric of subversion and revolt was generated which aimed at encouraging massive widespread uprising and focused on the rejection of the imposed dominion of the colonial state over Indian society.

¹¹⁷ “Bhawani Mandir”, pamphlet originally noticed by British authorities in August, 1905. Written by Aurobindo Ghose, in James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India, 1907-1917* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1917), 34.

¹¹⁸ “New Lamps for Old”, 2, August 21, 1893 in Sri Aurobindo, *Birth Centenary Library*, vol. 1 *Bande Mataram* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972), 10.

¹¹⁹ “New Lamps for Old”, 4 September 18, 1893 in *ibid.*, 22.

It is possible to detect potent early articulations of some of the central tenets of the political culture of *lok niti* in the “communitarian liberalism” of the more radical members of the nationalist movement during the later decades of the XIX and early decades of the XX century. Notably regarding the insistence on the importance of reviving pre-political sources of unity as a basis for an associative political practice and its anti-statist bias. More relevant, however, is the already discernible adoption of a multiple and diffuse notion of sovereignty similar to that of the multitude, and which would become central to the antipolitical thrust of *lok niti* in later years.

2.2.2 National multitude and civilization as conduct

The idea of the multitude is most thoroughly explored in the joint work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, and in the writings of the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno. In the work of the former the multitude is posed in opposition to a form of global power labelled Empire. Building on Michel Foucault’s notions of biopolitics and his views on the decentered nature of power, Hardt and Negri define Empire as a newly emerged form of sovereignty that, following what they conceive to be the eclipse of national sovereignty during the last decades of the twentieth century, implies a single logic of global rule for which there are no boundaries or limits. Empire is described as the paradigmatic form of biopower, in as much as it rules the very production of social life, in which the economic, the political and the cultural overlap. In their work, the passage to Empire is explained by the eclipse of modern forms of sovereignty based on geographical centres of power and territorial boundaries.¹²⁰ The multitude is a concept placed at the base and heart of this unitary Empire and constitutes the only effective way of subverting it. This subversion must come from a revealing of the parasitical relationship that the unitary Empire maintains with the multiplicity of the multitude. The logic of Empire states that the multiple cannot rule, since

¹²⁰ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 2000).

sovereignty can only be exercised by a unitary agent, and must therefore be ruled. However, the unitary can only be ruled by a parasitical reliance on the multiple which is the true origin and core of sovereignty.¹²¹

The multitude is conceived of as a plurality that needs not be unified by a common denominator or centre of power. In this crucial sense, it is opposed to the two most important subjects of modern politics: the people, and social classes. In order to discern the importance of the relationship between the idea of the multitude and early XX century radical nationalist politics in India, we must focus on the first of this oppositions. The multitude is opposed to the people in as much as the latter is informed and governed by the state. In other words, the people participate in the social contract established between the state and its citizens according to the most influential modern formulations of the state in which sovereignty is thought of as singular: only one can rule, whether the monarch, the party, the people or the individual.¹²² Paolo Virno invites us to think of the socio-political categories of the modern era as the result of the fierce clash between the people and the multitude. He suggests that modern political thought should be seen as a result of the triumph of the former in deterrence of the latter. This is most clearly perceived, Virno argues, in the centrality given in contemporary political theory to the work of Hobbes, who perceived in the multitude a dangerous manifestation of the state of nature that threatened the state and was to be seen as a non-desirable stage coming before the formation of the body-politic.¹²³ In the work of these authors the multitude is seen as inherently filled with positive potential for change. In other words, it is conceived as the true subject of political action and the only agent of socio-political transformation in the contemporary world of global power structures. The multitude, therefore, is the basis for any true oppositional revolutionary politics, and the starting point for political and intellectual radicalism.

I want to suggest that early XX century radical nationalist politics in India were based on a kindred conception of the masses of the country, which were

¹²¹ *Multitude : War and Democracy in the Age of Empire.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 100.

¹²³ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude : For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, 22.

thought of as a multiplicity brought together through an opposition to the workings, symbols and institutions of the colonial state. It was not only mass mobilization, but also the development of the self-reliance of these masses that lay at the heart of post-*swadeshi* politics. Significantly, turn of the century Indian leaders and thinkers polished the art of radical civil disobedience and boycott, which is nowadays seen as the primary form of action of the multitude.¹²⁴ The symbolic, economic and legal boycott promoted by figures such as Aurobindo, Tilak and Pal and taken over and greatly refined by Gandhi after 1919 arose from the belief that power had to be disjointed from the bottom up. The masses were seen as the basis of sovereignty and as the Achilles' heel of Empire, in this case a very real and not merely conceptual entity.

The reliance of contemporary notions of the multitude on the immanent potency of the collective has been the focus of important criticism. William Mazzarella has argued that such a principled attachment to the unmediated potentiality of the multitude proves disabling for the analysis of collective political action, given that the latter is only deemed possible "if the multitude's emergent energies remain pure, uncompromised by actually existing social institutions."¹²⁵ On his part, Ernesto Laclau associated the postulates of multitude theory, as these appear in the work of Hardt, Negri and Virno, with a mistaken and extreme reliance on tactical interventions at the expense of an overarching strategy. In his view, this amounts to a radical negation of politics from which necessarily stems the incapacity of this theory to provide a coherent account of what a truly revolutionary break could consist of, beyond the mere opposition to the decentered Empire.¹²⁶

Along with its implicit opposition to the category of the people, early XX century political radicalism and its offshoot culture of *lok niti* also echo multitude theory's open favouring of tactics over strategy and the reliance on the assumed immanent potentiality of the collective for oppositional action. However, this was not a negation of politics *per se*, but rather a consistent refusal to engage in

¹²⁴ Ibid., 70.

¹²⁵ Mazzarella, "The Myth of the Multitude, or, Who's Afraid of the Crowd?," 698.

¹²⁶ Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 241-4.

institutional politics that resulted from a reliance on the immanent potency of the multitude. Indeed, practices that went beyond the organization of massive opposition were derogatorily labelled as “mendicant” and “conservative”. Starting with early XX century *swadeshi* activism, this divergence in the approach to institutional politics carved a deep and lasting division of the nationalist movement in India, which would translate into the cleavage between right and left wingers of the Congress during the 1930s and 1940s, and would constitute the contrast between *lok* and *raj niti* upon which Jayaprakash Narayan based his political involvement following the 1950s.

Virno has argued that the concept of the multitude forces a redefinition of modern Hobbesian notions of political unity by placing it beyond the limits of the state. In his work, the unity of the multitude is to be found in faculties common to the entire human race, like intellect and language.¹²⁷ In contrast, I suggest the unity at the base of the early XX century national multitude in India, later taken over by *lok niti*, stems from a double origin: the rejection of the state and the quotidian associated with it¹²⁸, and the allegiance to what was constructed and imagined as the civilization of India.

In fact, the militant anti-statism of *swadeshi* developed in parallel to a process of re-imagining of Indian civilization, the values of which were posed in opposition to those of a perceived modern Western civilization. The theme of Indian civilization as a mirror of the West, at once a re-defining Other and an incomprehensible riddle, was abundantly developed during the nineteenth century. From nativist responses to utilitarian affirmations of the civilizational inferiority of India to the Neo-Hinduist embrace of India as the land of the primordial religion, the debate on what should be included as part of Indian civilization informed and defined the early development of nationalist politics. Despite a strong exclusionary tendency to frame it as a creation of Hindu culture, the construct of Indian civilization also provided late nineteenth century Indian

¹²⁷ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude : For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, 25.

¹²⁸ For a study of the importance of these rejections in radical nationalist politics in the turn of the XX century, see Shruti Kapila, “A History of Violence,” in *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, ed. Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

nationalists with the basis for a legitimate ideology and a source of political and organizational confidence.

In this sense, it can be said that for radical nationalists of the early XX century, the notion of civilization became an important site for the mobilization of the multitude, or the *demos*. This turn towards civilization was directly opposed to the process of imagination and regulation of society that had, during the later half of the nineteenth century, involved both the native elites and the colonial administration in a common project of codification of society through the logic of community, a tag that encapsulated distinct colonial categories such as races, clans, tribes and castes.¹²⁹ In the words of Gyan Prakash, it was at this conjuncture “that community, rather than the bourgeois individual, emerge(d) as an object of colonial knowledge and power.”¹³⁰ Through a new intelligibility generated by the enforcement of censuses, legal enactments and administrative measures, by the end of the nineteenth century colonial governmentality had succeeded in producing a new social imaginary that projected India as a collection of “discrete communities whose primordial sentiments” were to be modified and controlled by colonial legislation.¹³¹ One of the main outcomes of this process was the impossibility of a broad political movement of protest in the face of the colonial regime.

However, by the beginning of the XX century, anticolonial nationalists were recurring to the deliberately non-specific notion of civilization as a way of garnering an oppositional unity against the colonial state. This preference of the apparently apolitical unity of civilization would be foundational for the antipolitical culture of *lok niti*.

This foundational aspect of this civilizational unity is already explicitly clear in M. K. Gandhi’s famous tract *Hind Swaraj*. In this text, we find the basis for the programme of Non-Cooperation, which was to become the official programme of

¹²⁹ For a comment of these processes regarding caste, see Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind : Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, N.J. ; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 2001). And for the origins of the political codification of religious communities in India, see Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹³⁰ Prakash, "The Colonial Genealogy of Society. Community and Political Modernity in India," 83.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

the Indian National Congress after 1920, as well as a clear outline of the principles that would be later identified with *lok niti* practices. Written in 1909, this tract develops young Gandhi's ideas on the need for a truly Indian way of ruling India, a *swaraj*, or self-rule, based on the needs and true character of what he termed Indian civilization. Gandhi stands out among *swadeshi* thinkers and commentators in as much as he was struggling to grapple not only with the means and justification for the struggle against the British, but also and more crucially with the nature of the power that should replace the colonial state. In his view, any attempt to continue along the path of English parliamentary democracy would be like coveting "the tiger's nature, but not the tiger" and could only result in making "India English" and, having propitiated this, turning Hindustan into "Englishtan."¹³² The self-rule Gandhi advocated for had to be based not on an imitation of British models, but on a return to the civilization of India and a rejection of western civilization. The latter was labelled satanic, the result of a black age, and a degenerate and fundamentally deceptive view of life based on the illusion of speed, productivity and false bodily comfort.

The views expressed by Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* regarding the falsity of modern civilization would go on to become common among Indian thinkers of the 1910s. Such views would contribute to the declared need to awaken the power of India through an emphasis on the potency of its masses. This stance would be widely accepted across different sectors of the nationalist movement at least until the 1920s. In this respect, Lala Lajpat Rai, commenting on a trip to the United States in 1919, stated the following:

I have seen and lived at times for months in some of the biggest cities of the world, I have witnessed the highest achievements and the biggest glories of what passes under the name of modern civilization (...) I have gazed at the achievements of modern science and modern man with wonder and admiration. Yet all the time the ruling note of my thoughts has been one of sadness and helplessness. (...) (H)ere is no lack of play and pleasure. (...) All do their allotted work in their respective spheres of activities in all earnestness and seriousness. (...) (But) The generality of them have neither time nor inclination for the serious questions of life and

¹³² Gandhi and Parel (ed.) *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, 28.

death, of sin and virtue, of duty and religion. (...) The desire for power and pleasure absorbs the best thought and the best life of the west. (...) (I)f civilization means a reign of truth, honesty, brotherhood, justice, and equality; then what passes under the name of modern civilisation is not a genuine article.¹³³

This shared dismay over the degenerate spirit of modern civilization and its influence in India was at the core of early XX century radical nationalist critique. However, the potency of such politics stemmed not from the complaints it articulated, but from the solutions it offered. In the words of the young Gandhi, modern “civilization (was) not an incurable disease.”¹³⁴ It is at this point that Gandhi’s civilizational argument can be seen to predate contemporary discussions on the multitude and its relation to later *lok niti* practices, such as those defended by Jayaprakash Narayan. Just as recent critics like Hardt, Negri and Virno have thought of the multitude as placed at the base and heart of Empire, so were the people of India seen to be supporting British rule in colonial times. In Gandhi’s clear formulation: “The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them.”¹³⁵ The underlying assumption made by Gandhi presented British rule as being parasitical on the acquiescence of Indians. The fight for self-rule, therefore, had to be fought not by the sword but through the organized, massive rejection of modern civilization. This rejection involved the recovery of a true Indian civilizational heritage that could be traced thousands of years into the past, and which was still alive in those corners of India untouched by modern influence. In Gandhi’s view, *swaraj* was already present in the villages of India. The need of the day was to recover political autonomy through devotion to the practice of *ahimsa*, or non-violence, based on notions of sacrifice, discipline and the conviction of the superiority of Indian civilization.

In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi defined civilization not in technical or socio-economic terms. For him, civilization was a “mode of conduct which points out to

¹³³ Lala Lajpat Rai, *The United States of America: A Hindu’s Impression and a Study* (Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, 1919), 377-82.

¹³⁴ Gandhi and Parel (ed.) *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, 38.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

man the path of duty.”¹³⁶ This *dharmic* definition of civilization was opposed to the vertiginous changes championed by the modern West, and focused on ideals on continuity, self-reliance, autonomy and truth. The only way of achieving self-rule was by developing a political practice based on self-control, sacrifice, voluntarism and non-violence that involved the millions of India. The identification of these virtues with the goal of politics would be central to articulations of *lok niti*, from the *bhoodan* movement to the rise of the non-statist volunteer sector. Gandhi’s definition of civilization as the attachment to a moral mode of conduct is the clearest example of the ways in which the national multitude differed from earlier XIX century projects of assembling the social through the reform of a community. In contrast to the longing for the recovery of the authentic culture upon which the community could be based, the civilization appealed to by early XX century radicals was not defined by history or a pure tradition, but rather by the importance of a common moral code based on sacrifice, discipline and self-control. It appears clearly then that the thrust of the *swadeshi* multitude was fuelled by the need to create a unity through which an effective opposition to the colonial state could be articulated. This unity was not defined by the purity of a culture, but by adherence to a righteous practice.

The positive centrality of Indian civilization separates the national multitude from the multitude described by Hardt and Negri in one crucial aspect. For these authors, the multitude is a necessarily global, and therefore non-national, entity stemming from traits common to the entire human race. In this respect, it must be opposed to exclusionary categories like those linked to social classes and ethnicity. The unity of the post-*swadeshi* national multitude, as identifiable in the work of Gandhi and other turn of the century Indian communitarian radical thinkers, emerged from the expressed need of following a set of moral duties integral to the civilization of India. As a result, this multitude could not be thought of as the agent of global change. It is a necessarily provincial construction designed to bring India and the Indians together to oppose the discriminating working of the colonial state. This, as will be argued in

¹³⁶ Ibid., 67.

later chapters, must be seen as the source of one of *lok niti*'s most important contradictions and limitations: its incapacity to translate its potential for mobilization into substantial change in the arena of national politics.

Despite this opposition, this national multitude resembled the multitude described by Hardt and Negri in its open challenge to the liberal distinction between the public and the private. This is most visible in Gandhi's most formidable challenge to liberal political dichotomies: *satyagraha*. According to Paolo Virno, the multitude occupies a middle ground between the individual and the collective that invalidates the distinction between the public and the private.¹³⁷ By refusing to refer to notions of equality or agency, *satyagraha* can be seen to imply the centrality of precisely this middle ground and to encourage the emergence of a purely oppositional unity. Ajay Skaria has argued that by "revealing to the dominant that it was the cooperation of the subaltern that made their authority possible, *satyagraha* foregrounded the fundamental kinship and equality, within a Gandhian problematic, of the subaltern and dominant."¹³⁸ I take Skaria's cue and extend his argument by positing that the *satyagraha* of Non-Cooperation was the high-point and definite establishment of the national multitude, in as much as it fed on and crystallized the thrust of rejection of the colonial state and its collaborators championed by most nationalist leaders before 1919. In this way, the emergence of the practice of moral non-violent non-cooperation presents the culmination of radical early XX century nationalist politics and the beginning of *lok niti* practice.

The Non-Cooperation movement—which I have suggested must be seen as the foundational event of JP's life-long entanglement with protest and emancipatory politics—has to be placed in the context of an important growth in the use of techniques of civil resistance and a turn towards the potentialities of the masses across different locations of the globe, including the formation of the Spartacist League led by Rosa Luxemburg in Berlin, and the experiments in labour organization in which Antonio Gramsci was involved in Northern Italy.

¹³⁷ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude : For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, 25.

¹³⁸ Skaria, "Gandhi's Politics: Liberalism and the Question of the Ashram," 980.

However, the importance of the construct of an Indian civilization defined as a moral code of conduct separated Non-Cooperation from such movements, and opened a space for a new brand of politics in India. As I will argue in the following chapters, Jayaprakash Narayan's efforts to bring together Gandhi's ideas regarding Indian civilization with socialist models of social justice and emancipation through the political culture of *lok niti* would prove to be the most fruitful re-articulation of early XX century radical political thought in contemporary India.

2.3 *Swaraj and the teleology of lok niti*

This chapter was opened with the assertion that JP's life-long defence and promotion of the political culture of *lok niti* was meant to bring about the renovation of the techniques, demands and teleological assumptions that defined the politics of radical nationalism in India during the opening decades of the XX century. In later sections, it was argued that JP approached such demands and assumptions as a result of the devotion generated by the event of Non-Cooperation. Further, I posed that the *techniques* JP adapted as part of his politics of *lok niti* were marked by the anti-statist extolment of a conception of popular sovereignty, which I referred to as the national multitude, defined according to civilizational parameters. It is still necessary then to clarify what we mean by the *teleological assumptions* of early XX century radical nationalism. For this purpose, I will use this last section to argue that JP adapted a political teleology defined by an ideal of *swaraj* as social autonomy rather than political freedom.

The international scene during the 1910s, marked by the collapse of the Ottoman, Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, the institution of international organizations like the League of Nations and the eruption of anti-colonial uprisings in Egypt, Korea, China and India, was particularly favourable to nationalist demands in favour of self-determination and independence.¹³⁹ By the

¹³⁹ This is an argument developed in Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment : Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

middle of the decade, important anticolonial nationalist leaders in British India had openly adopted the radical sensibilities of turn of the century promoters of *swadeshi*. After 1915, the demand for Home Rule began to be voiced eagerly. In April 1916, Bal Gangadhar Tilak founded the Home Rule League in Maharashtra, which aimed at promoting the demand for complete self-determination “in the near future” and “plead(ing) before the British Democracy (for) the cause of Self-Government for India”.¹⁴⁰ On August of that same year, Annie Besant founded the All-India Home Rule League, which promoted the idea of an independent India as part of the British Empire and, in true *swadeshi* fashion, advocated for “the re-establishment of the indigenous system of Government, of proved value and reliability and in harmony with the temperament of the Indian people.”¹⁴¹

During the years leading to the Non-Cooperation movement, *swaraj* was thus wielded to refer to a Wilsonian project of national self-determination by important figures of the nationalist movement in India. However, a complementary current developed during these years, in which *swaraj* was thought of as a system of government marked by the autonomy of Indian society in the face of the state and institutional power. From this perspective, political freedom from British colonial rule was seen merely as a previous step for the obtainment of a higher and more virtuous stage of social order. An early example of this approach appears in the writings of Aurobindo, for whom political freedom was seen as the prerequisite for the recovery of the spiritual freedom of India, which represented true *swaraj*. Thus, in 1908, he wrote: “(S)piritual freedom can never be the lot of many in a land of slaves”, and “(s)ocial freedom is not a result of social machinery but of the freedom of the human intellect and the nobility of the human soul.”¹⁴²

The interpretation of *swaraj* that would have the most meaningful impact on JP’s later politics of *lok niti*, however, was the one developed by Gandhi in

¹⁴⁰ Bal Gangadhar Tilak, cited in *How India Can Save the Empire. A Collection of the Speeches Delivered by the Members of the Indian Deputation and Other Leaders on the Present Situation and the Future Work before Us...*, (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1918), 42-43.

¹⁴¹ Annie Besant, cited in George S. Arundale, “The Home Rule League by Its Organising Secretary,” (Adyar: Annie Besant, 1916), 2.

¹⁴² Aurobindo, *Birth Centenary Library*, 1 Bande Mataram, 700.

Hind Swaraj. In the latter's view, and in accordance with his understanding of civilization as moral duty, it was necessary to reject the corrupting influence of modern civilization, marked by a politics of slavery, associated with parliamentary democracy, and immorality, associated with the obsession with bodily comfort and speed. For the young Gandhi, Indian civilization was conceived in opposition to the modern state and the working of its institutions. The village was its paradigm of social life:

(O)ur forefathers (...) saw that our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of our hands and feet. They further reasoned that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance, and that people would not be happy in them, that there would be gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing in them, and that poor men would be robbed by rich men. They were, therefore, satisfied with small villages. They saw that kings and their swords were inferior to the sword of ethics, and they, therefore, held the sovereigns of the earth to be inferior to the Rishis and the Fakirs. (...) This nation had courts, lawyers and doctors, but they were all within bounds. Everybody knew that these professions were not particularly superior; moreover, these vakils and vairs did not rob people; they were considered people's dependants, not their masters. Justice was tolerably fair. The ordinary rule was to avoid courts. There were no touts to lure people into them. This evil, too, was noticeable only in and around capitals. The common people lived independently, and followed their agricultural occupation. They enjoyed true Home Rule.¹⁴³

According to Gandhi, true *swaraj* was in the villages, inasmuch as these were a space that allowed for the possibility of autonomous life, independent of the institutions and longings of modern civilization. The villages were the ideal that westernized political elites in India should strive for: it was in the villages where government was not separate from the people. In accordance with this line of thought, and addressing a public of urban readers Gandhi gave the following definition of *swaraj*:

When we are slaves, we think that the whole universe is enslaved. Because we are in an abject condition, we think that the whole of India is in that condition. As a matter of fact, it is not so, but it is as well to impute our slavery to the whole of India. But if we bear in mind the above fact, we can see that if we become free, India is free. And in this thought you have a definition of *Swaraj*. It is *Swaraj* when we

¹⁴³ Gandhi and Parel (ed.) *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, 68-69.

learn to rule ourselves. It is therefore in the palm of our hand. Do not consider this *Swaraj* to be like a dream.¹⁴⁴

Thus, *swaraj* appeared for Gandhi as the result of the obeisance of a prescribed duty for the sake of ruling oneself. It implied following individual duty for the sake of collective freedom and the promotion of a form of people's power based on self-control. He was categorical when stating that "(r)real home-rule is self-rule or self-control."¹⁴⁵

During the 1930s and early 1940s, JP would read the demand for *swaraj* through the logic of socialism. As a leader of the Congress Socialist Party, during these years he would demand political independence and national freedom as a way of promoting a socialist programme of socioeconomic revolution. Thus he declared that "(o)ur *swaraj* must mean *swaraj* for the poor"¹⁴⁶, and that it had to include "the vast millions—the masses, the peasants and workers"¹⁴⁷ of India. However, as we will see in later chapters, JP would drift away from materialism and party politics in the years following the transfer of power. This process was the result of his growing conviction that state institutions and political parties were responsible for taking power away from the people and blocking the path to *swaraj*. In 1957, he declared that the party system of independent India "was seeking to reduce the people to the position of sheep (and) periodically (act as) the shepherds who would look after their welfare." He went on to bemoan that "this to me (does) not spell freedom(...), the *swaraj*, for which I had fought for and for which the people of this country had fought."¹⁴⁸ Moreover, a couple of years later, he complemented this position by declaring his intention to enrich formal democracy with new "ways and means by which more and more people could *govern themselves* more and more."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 73.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 118.

¹⁴⁶ Jayaprakash Narayan, lecture on "The Task Before Us", delivered on 30 January 1938, at the Socialist Study Center, Patna, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. II (1935-1939), 205.

¹⁴⁷ "Basic Ideas of the Congress Socialist Party: Reply to S. K. Patil", *Bombay Chronicle*, 13 August 1934.

¹⁴⁸ *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, 25 October 1957, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 245.

¹⁴⁹ *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, 30 September 1959, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, 438. Emphasis in original.

In the years following 1947, JP would adhere to the view that *swaraj* had to imply the rejection of the separation between government and the people that Gandhi saw as intrinsic to modern civilization. However, JP would extend this rejection by applying it to the institutions of the state, which he saw as the agents of this separation between power and the people. As we will see in later chapters, he saw this separation between the state and the people—*lok* and *raj*—as the origin of corruption, callousness, poverty and injustice. Following his estrangement from materialism and party politics, JP's would follow a Gandhian conception of *swaraj*, and defend a vision of party-less democracy and an ideal of *sarvodaya* society. In 1969, a few years before his climatic intervention in the national scene as leader of the student movement in Bihar, JP made clear that true *swaraj* had not come with political independence; it was still necessary to strive for a "society in which there would be equality—economic, social and political(.) (A) society in which there would be no exploitation; a society in which people would manage their own affairs; a society in which people would largely look after themselves. It would be a self-regulated society. (...) That Swaraj (is) yet to be achieved."¹⁵⁰

In this sense, it can be said that, in addition to its anti-statism and its promotion of a conception of popular and multiple sovereignty, JP's politics were shaped by a special kind of teleology defined by a Gandhian conception of *swaraj*. Central to this teleology is the idea that, in spite of national political freedom, true self-rule has not yet been achieved and, furthermore, that insisting on the pursuit of institutional politics can only block the path to its realization. *Swaraj*, thus, will surely come, but only once the people are able to dispense with the corrupt practices of *raj niti* or power politics. Moreover, the recourse to this teleology suggests that the aim of JP's politics was the creation of a realm of politics autonomous from the state and its institutions and run by the direct action of the people. If during the years leading to the transfer of power, the general

¹⁵⁰ Jayaprakash Narayan, Address given to the National Conference of Voluntary Agencies, New Delhi to determine their role in the observance of the Mahatma Gandhi Centenary Year and published in *Voluntary Action*, vol. 11 (4); July-August 1969, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VIII (1960-1966, 414.

claim across British India was the need to oust the British, after 1947 JP continued to resent those in power for being separate from the people.

In recent years, this teleology has once again been introduced into the mainstream of Indian politics by important political figures. A clear example is the use given by Arvind Kejriwal, the leader of the Aam Aadmi Party, to the idea of *swaraj*. In a book published in 2012, Kejriwal argued that India's "fight for independence was not only for liberation from the British. It was also for *swaraj*; for self-rule." However, the "dream that in independent India the people (would) rule" was betrayed by the adherence of India's political class to corrupt and unjust methods and practices. In an echo of both Gandhi and JP, Kejriwal concludes that at present "(t)here is no sight of *swaraj*, which was the reason for our fight for independence."¹⁵¹

It is evident that, far from being a curious fact from the past, the teleology of *swaraj* as autonomy defended by JP during the best part of the XX century is still relevant in Indian politics today.

2.4. Conclusions

In this chapter I have attempted to outline the process and currents of thought developed in radical nationalist circles during the turn of the XX century as a way of sketching the origins of the basic populist logic and anti-political stances of the political culture of *lok niti*.

In the first section we suggested that it is important to emphasise the particularities of JP's place of origin as well as of the moment of origin of his political career. Throughout his life, JP's thought and politics would be marked by his Bihari heritage. As a result he would remain highly critical of elite political circles in Delhi, as well as intensely focused on issues related to land tenure and reform. At the same time, the strong emotional tinge of JP's recollections of the Non-Cooperation movement show the importance the moment had for him, and for the origin of his devotion to a politic of opposition, anti-statism, self-sacrifice and popular mobilization.

¹⁵¹ Arvind Kejriwal, *Swaraj* (New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2012), xx.

In this sense, Non-Cooperation was not only important for JP in terms of his personal experience. The unrest led by Gandhi also provided the elements that would remain important for JP's politics of protest throughout his life. Non-Cooperation demonstrated the transformational potential of the conception of popular sovereignty defended by turn of the XX century communitarian-minded nationalists. This was defined, I have posed, by a turn towards the masses which inaugurated the possibility of a politics of opposition and protest based on a "national multitude", marked by its opposition to the colonial state and its celebration of the civilizational heritage of India and marked by the predominance of morality over politics. As a result, and as I will elaborate in the following chapters, JP must be seen as one of the most important defendants of post-*swadeshi* radicalism during the twentieth century.

Despite all this, it must be stated that propounding a direct conceptual equivalence between the political thought of early XX century Indian thinkers, such as Gandhi, and that of late twentieth century theorists of the multitude would be coarse and counter-productive. It could be argued that the mere use of the concept of the multitude with regards to Gandhi is misplaced, given his defence of hierarchical social structures, notably caste. It must be clarified that in this work we are not suggesting the parity between the use given by early XX century Indian leaders to the labels developed by turn of the century communitarian liberalism—the masses or millions of India—and late twentieth century conceptions of the multitude. Nor is my intention limited to merely noting the proximity between the political techniques of post-*swadeshi* political protest and those advocated by more recent defenders of the multitude. Rather, we are interested in pointing out the ways in which both early XX century Indian political thought and the idea of the multitude participate of a common critique of liberal universalism regarding the location of autonomy, the role of the collective in political action, and the centrality of the rational individual and unitary conceptions of power. This critique is, in both cases, articulated through the

defence of the virtuous potentialities of multiplicity and pluralism¹⁵², the questioning of unitary sovereignty and the rejection of centralized foci of power. Therefore, this study aims at dealing with issues that go beyond the limits of India and South Asia, and involve the rethinking of the relationship of the vital energies of the collective and the political, as well as discussions regarding the possibility of conceiving of what has been called post-liberal projects of social action and transformation.¹⁵³ In this sense, my focus on JP's *lok niti* can be seen as a way of engaging with the way in which the collective—whether as crowd, multitude or mass—has been maligned by political thought throughout the last century, and of exploring currently eclipsed possibilities of political radicalism

As we will see in later chapters, JP's thought and politics would remain deeply Gandhian, even during his period as a socialist leader. From the radical thrust of post-*swadeshi* politics he inherited the rejection of the idea of the state as a site of unity and the investment on the potentialities of the multitude. From Non-cooperation he would extract a blue print for political agitation, as well as the event towards which he would remain faithful. However, as I will argue in the next chapter, JP's adoption of early XX century practices and notions of politics, among which the most salient would be those included in the Gandhian repertoire of protest, JP's political thought would be complemented by a devotion to a different image of the virtuous civilization: that espoused by early twentieth century socialists.

¹⁵² The importance of the notion of pluralism for Gandhian anti-statist politics has been explored in the recent work of Karuna Mantena, especially in Karuna Mantena, "On Gandhi's Critique of the State: Sources, Contexts, Conjunctures," *Modern Intellectual History* 9, no. 03 (2012).

¹⁵³ Mazzarella, "The Myth of the Multitude, or, Who's Afraid of the Crowd?."

3. The Young JP and Socialism (1929-1947)

In the previous chapter I posed that the Non-cooperation movement of 1919-1921 represented both the culmination of the radical nationalist agitation of the first decades of the XX century and the event that inaugurated JP's political militancy and fidelity towards protest. For him, the movement represented not only the beginning of his political career, but also a moment of unifying revolt, popular harmony, solidarity, direct action and mass awakening. These were to become the pillars upon which his conception of politics would evolve thereafter.

Likewise, in the previous chapter, it was advanced that during the later part of his life JP would focus on Gandhian methods of voluntarism and discipline as well as the Gandhian idealized construct of the true civilization of India based on the adherence to moral conduct, in an attempt to generate what he thought to be truly Indian forms of political action and emancipation, which he would condense using the label of *lok niti*. However, in the present chapter I will show that his practice of protest would be complemented by a devotion to a different image of the virtuous civilization: that espoused by early twentieth century socialism. In this sense, his was at base a very non-Gandhian project, based as it was on a Western modern conception of progress. Having returned from the United States as a self-avowed scientific socialist in 1929, JP would be busy during the 1930s trying to extend and carry on with the thrust aimed at complete home-rule defended by early XX century radical nationalists in India by complementing it with the ideas of Marx.

Essentially, as I will argue in this chapter, socialism for JP meant a form of politics capable of relating to and involving the interests and longings of masses, which he described as "the class of the future."¹⁵⁴ During the 1930s and early 1940s, JP would defend a form of politics that stretched beyond the logic of the elites and higher power circles. His adherence to socialism stressed the need to involve and mobilize the masses. During this time, socialism for JP was a politics

¹⁵⁴ Presidential Address at the Foundation conference of the All-India CSP, Patna, May 16-17, 1934, in G. K. C. Reddy, ed. *Fifty Years of Socialist Movement in India. Retrospect and Prospects* (Delhi: Samata Era Publications, 1984), 17.

of the *lok*, not the *raj*; a politics of and for the people and not of and for power. In this sense, his defence of socialism was a clear precedent to his later promotion of *lok niti*. However, until the late 1940s, JP's defence of socialism would remain defined by a statist logic and an institutional focus. The main objective of his politics during this time was the obtainment of political independence, which was seen as a previous and necessary step on the road to socialism.

Despite the underlying concern with the involvement of the masses, socialism for JP meant different things at different moments during these tumultuous decades. The present chapter is devoted to the analysis of these different meanings the outlining of the context of their transformations. Section 3.1 deals with the intellectual and political context of the 1920s and early 1930s, the period of JP's stay in the US and the early years of his return. This section will refer to the main debates on socialism developed in India during this time and discuss the institutional and political struggles that developed inside the nationalist movement as a result of the adoption of the flag of socialism among younger nationalists during the 1920s. This is a process in which the foundation of the CSP, a party led by JP, was of crucial importance. Section 3.2 covers JP's engagement with socialist theory and practice during the 1930s and early 1940s. It aims to trace his drifting away from Marxist orthodoxy and statist focus towards a more abstract and moral form of politics which, I will argue, can be seen as the moment of origin of his later devotion to *lok niti*.

3.1 The 1930s and the coming of the CSP

3.1.1 The 1920s: Jayaprakash in the US: Marxism and youthful impatience

*There in class I was known as a "Marxist."*¹⁵⁵

In February 1922 Gandhi decided to bring the Non-Cooperation movement to a halt following the incident at Chauri Chaura in which a mob of followers of

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Jayaprakash Narayan in which he talks about his student days in the United States, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, cited in Pranav Jani, "Bihar, California and the US Midwest: The Early Radicalization of Jayaprakash Narayan," *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 2 (2013): 163.

the Mahatma burned a group of British police officers to death. Later that year, the Congress was outlawed. For someone like the young Jayaprakash, this sudden cancelation of the revolutionary tide that had accumulated during the first two decades of the century must have been a blow. Had his sacrifice been in vain? He could not afford to study in Cambridge or London and, even if he had been able to, would this not mean betraying his devotion to the event of Non-Cooperation? He saw himself as an anticolonial revolutionary and an active participant in his generation's radical impatience. However, unlike the senior leaders of the Congress, he had no certainties.

I want to suggest that, when considering JP's lifelong devotion to protest, one must consider both the effect of the event of Non-Cooperation and JP's initial location within the ranks of the anti-colonial movement during the early 1920s. Resuming some of the points presented in the previous chapter, the young JP must be seen as a non-elite revolutionary from a region in the periphery of the nationalist agitations of the early XX century, full of political longing and incensed by the revolutionary happenings taking place in Bengal which he discussed with friends sitting "by the bank of the Ganga."¹⁵⁶ The young JP appears as a perfect example of what Chris Moffat has described as the ethics of impatience and fearlessness that impregnated young radicals following the culmination of the Non-Cooperation movement, many of which devoted themselves to a life of militancy and opposition.¹⁵⁷ Having renounced the opportunity for an education and a professional career, revolution appeared as an urgent experiential necessity for him. This is the reason why, following the cancellation of Non-Cooperation, he would become fixated on the prospect of revolution and on denouncing the arbitrary decisions of those in power.

From a friend studying in the United States, JP learned that in that country poor students could pay their way through school. Although his young wife, Prabhavati, refused to accompany him, JP applied for a visa and sailed to North America, via Japan. By October 1922, he had landed in California. He had to

¹⁵⁶ Narayan, "Jp'S Unfinished Biography," 314.

¹⁵⁷ Chris Moffat, "Experiments in Political Truth," *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 2 (2013).

work hard: he was employed in agricultural labour, restaurants, warehouses and factories. Having grown used to the economic dynamics of Bihar marked by caste hierarchies and hereditary specialization of labour, his experience in the United States of the 1920s had momentous consequences for the young Jayaprakash. During this period, he later told Welles Hangen, a journalist from the United States: "(t)he equality of human beings and the dignity of labour became real things to me (...). I noticed how foreman and workers addressed each other by their first names. There was no feeling of being below or inferior or anything like that."¹⁵⁸

Jayaprakash studied first in Berkeley and then, due to the high fees, moved to Iowa University and, finally, enrolled in Wisconsin University for a degree in social sciences. At the time, Wisconsin University was considered one of the most progressive institutions of higher education in the United States, and its authorities were known for their socialist affiliations. During his years in the United States he read Marx, Lenin, Luxembourg, Trotsky and Plekhanov. He also came in contact with the tracts written by the famous Bengali anarchist revolutionary turned Marxist ideologue M. N. Roy. In the U.S. JP experienced first hand the poverty and injustices generated by capitalism, as well as the realities of racial and social discrimination. He also engaged in discussion and friendship with members of the Communist Party and other young people of radical inclinations. During these years he met Manuel Gómez, the co-founder, along with Roy, of the Communist Party of Mexico and the person in charge of the Oriental Section of the Communist Party of the USA. Noticing his keenness and intelligence, Gómez suggested that JP travel to Moscow to complete his education at the newly founded Oriental University before going back to India. However, partly due to the intervention of Rajendra Prasad, a good friend of his father-in-law, this plan never materialized.¹⁵⁹ It was in this context that Jayaprakash began to drink "deep at the fountain of Marxism"¹⁶⁰, an experience

¹⁵⁸ Cited in Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 52.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 57-9.

¹⁶⁰ Jani, "Bihar, California and the Us Midwest: The Early Radicalization of Jayaprakash Narayan," 163.

that would deeply transform his political views and his concept of revolution. He finished his BA in 1928 and completed an MA in Sociology at Ohio State University the following year under the title “Cultural Variations”, in which he discussed the possibility of pursuing different approaches towards the problem of scientific truth and social change.¹⁶¹ Despite having been awarded a scholarship for a postgraduate degree, he was forced to return to India in October 1929 after learning his mother was seriously ill. Eight long years had passed since he had thrown his books into a dam and joined Gandhi’s Non-Cooperation.

During the years JP spent in the United State a widespread dejection spread among younger circles of the nationalist movement as a result of the cancellation of Non-Cooperation. This led to a rejection of Gandhi’s leadership, and the search for alternative programmes of action and political doctrines upon which to cement an effective opposition to the colonial government. During the rest of the 1920s protest and radical politics in India increasingly developed outside the limits of the Congress and aimed at going beyond what came to be perceived as the shortcomings of Gandhi’s thought and practice. The oppositional unity achieved by the Non-Cooperation Movement was fragmented and the politics of anticolonialism evolved along divergent and often confronting lines. Gandhi himself dropped out of mass politics to concentrate on village-based constructive work and the formation of his *khadi* promoting organization, the All-India Spinners Association. An important sector of the Congress, led by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swarajist party, and intended to carry forward the demand for immediate self-rule defended by early XX century nationalist politics. The 1920’s also saw the beginning of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar’s rise to prominence as the leader and representative of the Dalit community, and the emergence of communal politics, which involved the come back of the Muslim League and the growth of the Hindu Mahasabha. The last years of the decade were marked by the radicalization of the activities of terrorist organizations, like the one led by the iconic Bhagat Singh, and an increase in

¹⁶¹ Cultural Variation: A Thesis Presented for the Degree of Master of Arts, Ohio State University, 1929, in Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. I (1929-1935) (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 1-40.

labour based protest and agitation in industrial centers like Ahmedabad, Calcutta and Bombay. The growth of this radicalism in India during the 1920s developed in parallel to a wave of anti-imperialist agitations in different locations including Ireland, Palestine, Iraq, and contributed to a notable increase in British counter-insurgency.¹⁶² As a result, most of the protest movements taking place in India during this decade were stifled harshly: Bhagat Singh was sentenced to death in 1929, the same year in which a prolonged spate of labour strikes was put to an end with the incarceration of over thirty union leaders, including the marxist theorist and activist S. A. Dange, as a result of the famous Meerut Conspiracy Case.

For this generation of younger nationalists who came to prominence in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the promise of socialism conferred the politics of anti-colonialism with a horizon of expectations that differed sharply from that of older participants of the freedom movement.¹⁶³ It is clear that the article published in 1919 in a Lucknow newspaper that asserted that there was “not the ghost of a chance of India substituting the leadership of Lenin for that of Mahatma Gandhi”¹⁶⁴ was symptomatic of the prevailing political mood at the time of the beginning of the Non-Cooperation Movement. However, those born during the turn of XX century, like JP, formed part a new generation of nationalists, one that “read Karl Marx as eagerly as an earlier generation had read Mazzini.”¹⁶⁵ The members of this younger generation of nationalists that emerged during the 1920s shared with Jayaprakash a common background and trajectory. Many of them had been radicalised in nationalist colleges during the national unrest of 1919-1921. For example, Chandrashekhar Azad, one of the central figures of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, is said to have started his involvement in nationalist politics in the midst of the Non-Cooperation

¹⁶² Manjapra, M. N. Roy : *Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism*, 73.

¹⁶³ For more on the notion of the horizon of expectation see “Time and History”, in Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, 100-14.

¹⁶⁴ *The Advocate*, Lucknow, 1919, cited in Zafar Imam, “The Rise of Soviet Russia and Socialism in India, 1917-1929,” in *Socialism in India*, ed. B. R. Nanda (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1972), 54.

¹⁶⁵ Sankar Ghose, *Socialism and Communism in India* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971), 15.

movement.¹⁶⁶ As a result they shared a common aversion to the institutions and symbols of colonial politics and the colonial state and defended the assumptions and ideals of early XX century political radicalism described in the previous chapter. This was especially true with regards to the importance of direct action.

Revolutionary socialism started to have a strong appeal during the late 1920s. It came to inspire visions of heroic struggle and sacrifice among these young radicals. However, JP's prolonged stay in the United States had provided him with a different perspective on socialism, which was unique among his contemporaries. In spite of his admiration for the revolutionary impetus of other members of his generation, notably Bhagat Singh—whose execution he described as “one of the most tragic incidents in (India's) national history”¹⁶⁷—the young JP did not see socialism in the late 1920s merely as a programme based on direct action and the adoption of violent means; rather, he conceived of socialism as a programme of people-oriented politics. This point will be elaborated upon further in the following sections.

3.1.2 Young Nationalists and Leftist Politics before the 1930s

The emergence of diverse, and sometimes confronted, fronts and programmes of nationalist agitation in British India during the years immediately prior to and following JP's return to India resulted in increasing pressure on the Congress to transform itself from a loose and broad movement to a more disciplined and structured organisation. It has been argued convincingly that the last years of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s were also marked by a fertile interaction between younger and more radical nationalist circles—of which the most famous example was the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association—and individual members of the Congress.¹⁶⁸ Both of these processes contributed to

¹⁶⁶ This fact is mentioned by Jawaharlal Nehru in Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1936 (1958)), 261.

¹⁶⁷ Jayaprakash Narayan, Oral History Interview with Arun Gandhi, March 1965. University of Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies Archive, Oral History Collection.

¹⁶⁸ Kama Maclean, *A Revolutionary History of Interwar India. Violence, Image, Voice and Text* (London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers), 2015).

the origin and initial development of what began to be called the “Left Wing” of the India National Congress, a faction initially rallied around the figures of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose.

This Left Wing adopted a program based on the demand for complete independence from British rule and the implementation of a loosely defined socialist program of socioeconomic national development. In their demands, the members of the Left Wing of the late 1920s were the inheritors of the radical politics developed during the opening decades of the XX century, especially regarding the demand for complete and immediate home-rule and the rejection of previous constitutionalist methods of the Congress. However, they did not take over the anti-statist tinge of *swadeshi* and Gandhian *satyagraha*. Instead, they began to think of the possibility of radical change through the state. In this sense, the members of this Left Wing would take the lead in thinking about the shape of the future national state, a chore they would codify through the logic of socialism, an ideology that, since the mid nineteenth century, had been at the helm of most of the organized protest against social inequality and colonial domination in Europe. Thus, the meaning given by the Left Wingers of the Congress following the late 1920s to *swaraj* was more in line with Tilak’s demand for immediate self-rule than with the approach developed by figures like Gandhi and Aurobindo, which equated it with a social and individual autonomy in the face of organized power.

The internal cleavage of the Congress during these years has been convincingly explained as a result of the growth of Indian capital and the gradual increase of its involvement in politics.¹⁶⁹ The main members of the Congress “Right Wing”—famously led by Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Prasad—were united by a common orthodox background, an unwavering support for Gandhi, and a close association with Indian capitalists.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Claude Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-1939 : The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁷⁰ For a discussion of the common views of these leaders, see Reba Som, *Differences within Consensus : The Left and Right in the Congress, 1929-1939* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995).

For their part, big Indian capitalists were an easily identifiable group, almost exclusively located in a few cities where large-scale industry was concentrated, like Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Coimbatore and Cawnpore. Indian Industry had grown and diversified considerably since the first decades of the century, favoured by the patriotic zest of economic *swadeshi*, symbolized by the early success of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, founded in 1907. The obstacles presented to international trade by the outburst of the First World War stimulated the growth of Indian industries after 1914, and strengthened large-scale accumulation of capital in Indian hands, which, over the 1920s concentrated in a relatively small circle formed by people like Pheroze Sethna, Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Lalubhai Samaldas and F. E. Dinshaw.¹⁷¹ Most of these early members of the Indian capitalist class were supporters of the Congress and of Gandhi personally who, in turn, succeeded formidably in extracting large sums of money from them to fund the activities and growing influence of the Congress across India. With the radicalization of the younger sections of the Congress during the late 1920s an alliance began to emerge between the Gandhian leaders and big business: while the former, abandoned by Gandhi who had left for the villages, feared losing control over the party, the latter saw in the confrontation with the colonial government advocated by the leftists a threat to their interests, and in their socialist rhetoric the possibility of a future confrontation.¹⁷²

However, and despite the anxieties of older figures of the Congress and representatives of big business, the approach to socialism taken by younger leaders like Nehru and Bose towards the beginning of the 1930s remained hazy and undefined, in part as a result of the limited debate on socialism taking place in British India at the time. Before the coming of scientific socialism as a dominant interpretative key following 1917, socialism in India had been chiefly discussed in relation to two broad topics: its relation to the caste system, and the ways in which it countered what were perceived as the injurious effects of

¹⁷¹ Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-1939 : The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party*, 10-20.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 97-8.

modern industrial civilization. Regarding the first topic, it is possible to distinguish two differing approaches to the relation between socialism and caste: on the one hand, the caste system was praised by some authors as a more realistic and organic form of social organization and social justice for India.¹⁷³ On the other, figures like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee¹⁷⁴ and Swami Vivekananda addressed the injustice permeating the *varna* and *jati* systems, and signalled towards the revolutionary potential of western programme of socialism. Regarding the discussion of socialism as the remedy for the industrial civilization, it was mainly through Annie Besant's promotion of socialism as "the next great stage of civilization"¹⁷⁵ that introduced the issue into nationalist circles before the 1920s.

Following the end of the Great War and the triumph of the Soviet Revolution, socialism in India began to be discussed in relation to the power of labour and the possibilities of opposition to capitalist development, which in turn began to be associated with the pernicious effects of imperialism. In 1920 the first session of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) took place. The presidency was given to the leader from the Punjab Lala Lajpat Rai. Following the lead of Annie Besant, who in previous years had promoted socialism as "the next great stage of civilization"¹⁷⁶ among nationalist circles, Rai rejected the de-humanizing impetus of modern industrialization to which, following Gandhi, he opposed the ideal of *khadi* and the project of *swaraj* as national autonomy and self-reliance. *Swaraj* or self-rule was for him a way of contributing to the construction of "a new world, without the one imposing on the other and without the one dominating and exploiting the other."¹⁷⁷ In his inaugural address at the first session of AITUC, he linked the concern with the dangers and injustices created by modern civilization with the "truth" of socialism such as it had been

¹⁷³ See, for example, D. Pant, "Socialism, Its Embryonic Development in India" in *Published by the author* (Lahore 1919); Satish Chandra Gan, "The Caste System of India. A Practical Form of Socialism," (Dibrugarh 1907).

¹⁷⁴ See Bankim's essay *Samya*, published as "Bankim on Equality" in Bankim Chandra Chatterji and M. K. Haldar, *Renaissance & Reaction in Nineteenth Century Bengal* (Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1977).

¹⁷⁵ Annie Wood Besant, *The Future Socialism* (Madras: Theosophist Office, 1912), 3.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Lala Lajpat Rai, "Ideals of Non-Cooperation," (Madras: S. Ganesan, 1924), 38.

fashioned by the Bolsheviks. He opposed socialism to the unjust world system of capitalism and imperialism, and declared that the only way to prevent the ruin of India was the organization of labour along socialist lines.¹⁷⁸

During the turn of the 1930s, Bose and Nehru took over some of these prior positions, especially the association of capitalism with imperialism, the idea of socialism as a step towards a new civilization and the need to pursue a mass-oriented politics, and came together in defence of socialism. In a text written in 1934, Nehru stated that in the struggle for independence the priorities of the Congress should be structured according to the needs of “the masses, the peasantry and the workers”, and argued that freedom was no more than the means through which to end with “poverty and disease and suffering and (provide) the opportunity for everyone to live the good life”.¹⁷⁹ For his part, Bose had, at least since 1928, urged for “a coalition between labour and nationalism” and the development of “economic consciousness” as part of anticolonial agitations, by which he meant the promotion of politics along class lines.¹⁸⁰ Likewise, and in contrast with those who had seen *swaraj* as autonomy, both Nehru and Bose stressed the importance of conquering the state in order to implant socialism.

Despite rejecting the teleology of *swaraj* as autonomy promoted during the *swadeshi* years, the adoption of the cause of socialism by younger nationalists like Nehru and Bose during the late 1920s reveals their allegiance to some of the most important principles of early XX century radical nationalism, especially the assertive turn to the masses and the promotion of a civilizational transformation through politics. However, as a result of their loose approach and the lack of a systematic debate during previous years, before 1934 the leaders of the emerging left wing of the Congress did not develop a systematic and original

¹⁷⁸ AITUC, “Report of the First Session (Held at Bombay, 1920),” ed. All-India Trade Union Congress (Bombay 1920), 17-18.

¹⁷⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, “Whither India?,” in *Nehru on Socialism: Selected Speeches and Writings* (New Delhi: Perspective Publications, 1933), 13-14.

¹⁸⁰ Subhas Chandra Bose, Presidential Address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, Poona, 3 May 1928, in Subhas Chandra Bose, Sisir Kumar Bose, and Sugata Bose, *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose* (Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 84-87.

definition of the role socialism should play in the wider arena of nationalist politics. This chore would be taken over by a group of young leftists that rallied under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan during the 1930s and formed the core of the Congress Socialist Party.

3.1.3 The Congress Socialist Party

Jayaprakash left the United States in 1929, the year that marked the moment of culmination of a thrust of revolutionary terrorism that had spread across North India during the later half of the 1920s. On 8 April, barely six months before JP's return to India, Bhagat Singh and B. K Dutt interrupted a session of the Legislative Assembly in Delhi by throwing a bomb into the room. A few months later, on 23 December, on the same day in which the first Round Table Conference was to be held in Delhi, a second bomb was set off in the tracks along which Lord Irwin's train was approaching the city. Conversely—and, as it has been argued, probably in response to the proliferation of similar terrorist activities and the acceptance it generated among popular sectors¹⁸¹—the months following JP's return to India also coincided with the comeback of the Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi, to the forefront of nationalist politics. In early 1930, the Mahatma inaugurated a new national campaign of civil disobedience based on a renewed refusal to pay taxes and a boycott of British institutions and goods. The agitation culminated with the signing and eventual collapse of a political pact between Gandhi and Lord Irwin, the viceroy of India, and the arrest in 1931 of over 40,000 Congress supporters,¹⁸² including Gandhi himself, who would spend the next two years in prison.

Although nearly a decade had passed since he had left India following the Non-Cooperation movement, JP returned to find a political scene marked by the proliferation of radical anticolonial activity and the rise to prominence of Gandhi

¹⁸¹ This argument is developed in Maclean, *A Revolutionary History of Interwar India. Violence, Image, Voice and Text*.

¹⁸² Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia : History, Culture, Political Economy*, 2nd ed. ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 193.

as the foremost leader of nationalist politics. In many ways, the situation in 1930 must have appeared to him very similar to the one in 1921.

Briefly after his return to India, JP was invited by Jawaharlal Nehru to head the Congress Labour Research Division Department, a body dedicated to the diffusion and teaching of socialist and Marxist literature.¹⁸³ During the following years Jayaprakash drifted decisively towards the emerging left wing of the Congress led by Nehru and Bose. Following the death of his mother in September 1930, JP resigned his post as head of the Labour Research Division of the Congress and left Allahabad where, at Nehru's request, he had settled following his return to India. His anxiety about devoting his time to research and academic activities while the Civil Disobedience movement developed across the country had been clear since the early months of 1930.¹⁸⁴ In the following months he became very active politically and participated in promoting campaigns of civil disobedience until his arrest in 1932, effected in the midst of a growing wave of repression by the colonial government. He was sent to Nasik jail, where he was to share his imprisonment with a group of young socialist nationalists that included Rammanohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Minoo Masani, Yusuf Meherally and Asoka Mehta. Under JP's leadership, these men would form the core of the Congress socialist group in the following years, and would remain close to him personally throughout the decades to come. From their discussions in Nasik jail, the plan to lead a radical initiative that could veer the activity of the Congress leftwards emerged. This plan crystallised with the creation of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) on May 17, 1934 in Patna, under the chairmanship of Acharya Narendra Deva. The first national conference of the party was held in Bombay, between the 21 and 22 of October of that same year. On this occasion Jayaprakash acted as general secretary of the party.

¹⁸³ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 73.

¹⁸⁴ Letter to Mahatma Gandhi, 24 February 1930, AICC Office, Allahabad. Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, 42.

From its creation, the CSP symbolised the first significant instance of leftist political activism within the Congress¹⁸⁵, as well as the first formal institutional engagement with Marxian thought outside established communist circles in India. JP's leadership—he would remain the secretary of the party until 1947—brought together the eclectic blend formed by the differing political inclinations of its members, which ranged from Trotskyism to Gandhism, via social democratic leanings. The party was defined as Marxist, but rejected the Leninist principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat and rejected affiliation with either the Second or the Third Internationals. In the Constitution approved at the Bombay Conference of 1934, the CSP declared the attainment of complete independence and the subsequent establishment of a socialist society as its main objectives. The latter included the transfer of all power to the producing masses, the development of a state-planned economy, official recognition of the right to work, and the elimination of princedom without compensation.

From the beginning, the programme of the CSP revealed a big concern with the situation of the peasantry, which distinguished its position from that of other left wing parties at the time. The 1934 Constitution emphasised the need for the redistribution of land to landless peasants, the promotion of collective farming, and the liquidation of peasant debt as crucial elements of the programme of the CSP.¹⁸⁶ This was partly the result of the importance of the Kisan Sabha movement in the state of Bihar. Formed in 1929 under the leadership of the charismatic Gandhian leader Swami Sahajanand, the Kisan Sabhas would go on to become central to the workings of the CSP in Bihar during the 1930s.¹⁸⁷ At the same time, it denoted a basic difference in the outlook of the CSP and that of other left inclined Congressmen, including Nehru, during the 1930s. On the one hand, the CSP consistently emphasised the importance of land reform, the redistribution of land to the peasants and the cancellation of

¹⁸⁵ Jayabrata Sarkar, "Power, Hegemony and Politics: Leadership Struggle in Congress in the 1930s," *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2006): 334.

¹⁸⁶ All India Congress Socialist Party: Constitution, Programme and Report of the Organising Secretary (from the Bombay Conference of 1934), in Reddy, *Fifty Years of Socialist Movement in India. Retrospect and Prospects*, 104-05.

¹⁸⁷ M. A. Rasul, *A History of the All India Kisan Sabha* (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1974).

peasant debt as the basis of any socialist programme of government during the 1930s. On the other, other leftist Congress members outside the CSP during this time were less favourably inclined towards the virtues of agrarian economy and had already begun to think of industrialization as the only remedy for the constraints created by the economic system implanted in India by the colonial government. The issue of land, moreover, would remain a central concern for JP even after his retirement from institutional politics in the 1950s, a time during which he would devote himself entirely to the land-donation movement of *Bhoodan*.

The formation of the CSP formalized the confrontation between the undeclared schools of thought of the Congress, with the leftists looking to extend the radical programmes of early XX century nationalism based on the demand for total and immediate *swaraj* and the rejection of constitutional methods by infusing them with a socialist revolutionary discourse. During the years following its creation, the CSP presented itself as the natural heir of the anti-imperialist thrust defended by the Congress till that moment. For this purpose, the party leadership declared the need to “wean the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress away from its present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary socialism”¹⁸⁸, and to radicalize the Congress through the broadening of its popular base among the masses and working classes.¹⁸⁹ The CSP would remain at the centre of leftist politics in India during the 1930s thanks to their closeness to important Congress leaders like Nehru and Bose, as well as to their ability to garner together contending organizations like the Royists and communists in a common Left Bloc, in which the role of JP was instrumental.

Despite the growth in the popularity of revolutionary terrorists in the late 1920s, after 1931 there was an important effort made by the Congress to weaken the growing popularity and influence of figures like Bhagat Singh. At the helm of this effort was Gandhi himself who, in July 1931 stated that “Bhagat Singh

¹⁸⁸ Statement on nature, task and programme of the C.S.P. adopted at the 2nd Annual Conference of the C.S.P., Meerut, on 20 January 1936, in D. K. Bajwa, *Jayaprakash Narayan and Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1987), 179.

¹⁸⁹ Statement on nature, task and programme of the C.S.P. adopted at the 3rd Annual Conference of the C.S.P., Faizpur, on December 23 and 24, 1937, in *ibid.*, 180-3.

worship had done incalculable harm to the country” and, despite its good intentions, had resulted in “goondaism and degradation.”¹⁹⁰ Thereafter, the high command of the Congress openly rejected the violence of revolutionary terrorists, and conformed officially to a non-violent stance. In this context, the CSP’s confessed aim of radicalizing the Congress, and its insistence on introducing the prospect of revolution to the nationalist debate can be seen as an attempt to carry forward the thrust of figures like Bhagat Singh. However, JP soon recognised that “if a revolution had to be brought about it could not be done by a few young men throwing bombs or shooting off at Englishmen, or britishers (sic.), or foreigners. It had to be done by a mass movement and a mass revolution.”¹⁹¹ In this sense, the CSP’s defence of revolution would not be tinged by the recourse to violence direct action but to the promotion of a Marxian framework in defence of mass-oriented politics.

The highpoint of the trajectory of the Congress socialists came in 1936 when, in his address as president of the Congress at Lucknow, Nehru declared that the only way to end the poverty of India was through socialism. However, during the next couple of years the antagonism of the Congress Right wing and the internal conflict in the Left Bloc weakened the position of the socialists and contributed to the growth of conflict inside the Congress, which after the 1937 elections had emerged as the most important party in British India. In 1938, Subhas Chandra Bose was elected as president of the Congress and rallied around him the support of the CSP and the communist elements of the party, offering them the possibility to recover their winding influence. Despite having antagonized most of the Congress leadership, and in open defiance of Gandhi’s wishes, Bose ran again for president of the Congress in 1939 and was re-elected mainly on support from the socialists. This led to an important crisis inside the party that culminated with Bose’s resignation and his eventual flight from India. From that moment on, the position of the socialists inside the Congress weakened further. Following the eruption of the war in Europe, the colonial

¹⁹⁰ *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol 2, July-December 1931, p 11.

¹⁹¹ Jayaprakash Narayan, Oral History Interview with Arun Gandhi, March 1965. University of Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies Archive, Oral History Collection.

government secured the cooperation of the Congress high command, headed by Gandhi, and imprisoned most of the leaders of the Left Bloc, cancelling the possibility of any left-wing political assertion during the following years.

Until the late 1930s, JP consistently defended socialism as the only true and valid goal of anti-colonialism and the only effective revolutionary ideology for the nationalist movement. Reviving the impatience of young militants of the 1920s, he declared that socialist revolution was an urgent necessity, and affirmed that advocating for gradual change was a recipe for disaster:

Democratic institutions are crumbling everywhere. There is no question today of a gradual evolution to socialism. Every one today realises that what is required is swift and resolute action. Capitalism threatened with extinction is nowhere in a mood to let socialists slowly and pleasantly clip its wings and chop off its limbs bit by bit. Today it is in a desperate mood and will not allow any monkeying.¹⁹²

But what did socialism effectively mean for JP? Was he merely updating previous debates on socialism carried out in India, such as the ones briefly reviewed above? Was he trying to adapt an orthodox reading of Marxism to Indian conditions? In what ways did his appeal to socialism connect with his fidelity to the truth of the Non-Cooperation movement? Essentially, as will be argued in the next section, socialism for JP meant a form of politics capable of relating to and involving the interests and longings of masses. In his view, the masses were “the class of the future.”¹⁹³ This presented the urgent need for creating a form of politics that was able to go beyond the logic of higher politics and become comprehensible for them and the common people. In this sense, his defence of socialism was a clear precedent to his later promotion of *lok niti*. However, until the late 1940s, he would stick to a statist logic institutional politics in his defence of socialism. The next section analyses JP’s writings and speeches produced between 1934 and 1940. In this body of work it is possible to account for three crucial ways in which JP sought to enrich the radical anti-

¹⁹² A Socialist Syllabus, January 1934, prepared by Jayaprakash Narayan for the Socialist Research Institute, Patna, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. I (1929-1935), 249.

¹⁹³ Presidential Address at the Foundation conference of the All-India CSP, Patna, May 16-17, 1934, in Reddy, *Fifty Years of Socialist Movement in India. Retrospect and Prospects*, 17.

constitutional legacy of early XX century radical nationalism through the incorporation of the principles, postulates and techniques of socialism, which were seen as: a) the only effective way of radicalizing the Congress, b) as a way of going beyond Gandhi's failures and replacing his outmoded doctrine of non-violence, and c) as a way of thinking about the contours and content of the future national state.

3.2 The Young Swadeshi Marxist: JP and Socialism, 1934-1947

3.2.1 Denouncing the ugly fissures of society: A socialist revolution for the people

When thousands upon thousands of hungry and oppressed peasants flock to hear Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declare that Socialism is the only solution for the problems of poverty and unemployment, the struggle of independence rises to higher heights because it receives content which is understood by the millions of the country. (...) (Socialism) is the warp and woof of the immediate fight. It colours it, it gives it direction, it provides it with an edge of Idealism.
Jayaprakash Narayan, December 1936.¹⁹⁴

The epigraph presented above makes clear the basic meaning socialism held for JP throughout his life, including the years during which he abandoned power politics and immersed himself in the constructive work of *lok niti*. For him, socialism essentially represented a politics capable of involving the masses, being understood by the people, and of going beyond the logic of the elites and higher power circles. In his view, it was only through socialism that the national struggle could be embedded with true revolutionary meaning. During the 1930s and 1940s, he often referred to "swaraj for the poor" as the only valid kind of self-rule acceptable,¹⁹⁵ and spoke of the obligation of the Congress to establish a "common's man *raj*."¹⁹⁶ In this sense, his focus on socialism is a prefiguration of his later devotion to *lok niti*. Likewise, until the end of the 1940s, he saw socialism as the logical culmination of the revolutionary essence of the Congress emerging from the radicalism of early XX century nationalism, which was embodied in the programme of the Left Wing of the party.

¹⁹⁴ "First Things First", *Congress Socialist*, 26 December 1936.

¹⁹⁵ Lecture on "The Task Before Us", 30 January 1938, Socialist Study Center, Patna, in Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, vol. II (1935-1939), 205.

¹⁹⁶ Speech at a meeting of Muslims at Patna, 4 November 1947. Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, vol. IV (1946-1948), 193.

Following the creation of the CSP in 1934, Jayaprakash began a vigorous campaign of promotion of the party's goals and socialist project through numerous speeches, pamphlets and messages published in the party's newspaper, the *Congress Socialist*. Most of his writings during the next years were marked by the insistence on the need for immediate revolutionary action, and an endorsement of the Soviet model of revolution and state-led socialism. He highlighted the harmful interference of the leadership of the Congress in the way of revolution in India and criticised its members by reviving early twentieth century attacks based on the denunciation of their conservatism and mendicant politics. The goal of the socialists, he stressed, was that of immediate independence and socialism "in the name of the masses."¹⁹⁷ Updating early XX century radical nationalist parlance through the filter of anticolonial socialism, JP fiercely denounced the constitutional methods of the Congress old guard and claimed socialism to be the only available basis for true and lasting *swaraj*. For this, he declared, "there (was) no alternative".¹⁹⁸

Despite all this, during the 1930s JP and his group of socialists were not opposed to the Congress *per se*, only to what they termed the conservative and reactionary politics of its leadership. In his view, the Congress remained the true body of revolution in India, and its weakening could only lead to the strengthening of communal bodies that would fragment the nationalist struggle. In this respect, adherence to socialism was not seen as a way of opposing the Congress, but rather as a path towards its radicalization and the reviving of its original revolutionary nature. In 1935, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the party's foundation, JP published an article in *Congress Socialist* containing what is probably the clearest exposition of this view of the two sides of the Congress. In it he identified the CSP as the inheritor of the original tradition and holder of the true essence of the nationalist movement in India based on direct revolutionary action. He identified the mutiny of 1857 as the point of origin of this tradition. 1857, he argued, was a moment characterized as an "open armed

¹⁹⁷ "Statement on Congress Working Committee Resolution", 22 June 1934, Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, 65.

¹⁹⁸ "Genesis of Congress Socialist Group: Reply to S. K. Patil", 11 August 1934, in *ibid.*, 75.

struggle for sovereign power”, and thus radically opposed to the founding moment of the Congress in 1885, described as a mere act of “petitioning (for) petty demands.”¹⁹⁹ According to him, 1885 represented the beginning of a conservative, constitutional current of nationalist politics, while 1857 signified the point of origin of the true struggle for the liberation of India.

In this article JP adapts the Marxist conception of historical change to the development of opposition and protest in India. In his view, 1857 was the culmination of a feudal stage of opposition to the British led by the princes, described as the only agents capable of heading a revolt against the British at that time. The creation of the Congress marked the beginning of a conservative politics of the middle class, entirely detached from the masses. The Congress before the 1920s, he argued, was incapable of being truly revolutionary since it was “clear that those whose demand it was that more jobs should be given to them could not be the class which would strive for freedom from the system which has those jobs at its disposal.” A truly revolutionary struggle for freedom could only be carried out through the potency of the masses and not through the “frivolous” tactic of “passing resolutions”. In this article JP goes on to argue that the growth of a native bourgeoisie in India, caused by the emergence of native capitalism around the turn of the twentieth century, had propitiated the development of a new and more radical leadership for the masses: these were men that, like most of the leaders of the Congress Right Wing, did not belong to the traditional conservative elite that formed the 1885 Congress, but from what he termed the “upper agrarian strata”. However, this new leadership, seen as a step more revolutionary than the Congress conservatives, had failed to unite the masses in a common struggle for independence.²⁰⁰ The failure of the nationalist movement up to that moment, 1935, including the failure’s of Gandhi’s second civil disobedience movement of 1931, “*was the failure not of the Indian masses, as it has been commonly supposed, but of the Indian bourgeoisie.*”²⁰¹ For JP the radicalization of nationalist politics after 1919 marked the failure of the old

¹⁹⁹ “Fifty Years”, in *Congress Socialist*, 28 December 1935.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

educated elites of the early Congress, and the end of the second civil disobedience movement marked the failure of “the second phase of Indian opposition to imperialism—the bourgeois phase.” From this conviction, the mission of the young socialists emerged clearly, and was described in terms of destroying “the ideological hold of the bourgeoisie over the Congress worker”. JP saw himself and the members of the CSP as the vehicle for a third stage of the national liberation struggle, and for a renovation of the Congress through a turn to socialism:

If the Congress Jubilee means anything to us, it must not be mere futile sentimentalization (sic.), mere wooden worship. It must mean (a) ruthless questioning; ruthless evaluation and (...) a bold leap ahead. What we need today is not the encrusted loyalty of age, but the iconoclast courage of youth. It seems to me that we will have to fight the old idols and tear up part of what we have built up so that we may build higher.²⁰²

Apart from its central role as the ideology that would radicalize and renovate the aged and conservative Congress, socialism was presented by JP as a programme capable of endowing the nationalist movement with the tools to move beyond the limitations of Gandhi’s project. Between 1934 and 1937, JP would contrast the scientific assumptions of socialism, described as a true “science of society(...)looked upon by millions of people the world over as their only guide and saviour”²⁰³, with Gandhi’s nonviolence, referred to in terms of an obscure doctrine of unclear religious meaning. Moreover, Gandhi’s constructive work was regarded as an obstacle to the nationalist revolution; in this sense, JP stated that the Congress should “go to the peasants, but (...) not with a spinning wheel but with the militant force of economic programme”.²⁰⁴ In 1936, Jayaprakash published his lengthiest and most systematic analysis of socialism and its possible adoption in India to date: *Why Socialism?* In this text, he equated Gandhi’s views with those of international reformism, the interest of which laid in maintaining the

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Letter to the General Secretary of the AICC, 20 July 1934, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. I (1929-1935), 70.

²⁰⁴ Comment on Vallabhbhai Patel’s Speech at Bombay, 18 July 1934, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, 69.

established order of society. Gandhian reformism was decisively un-revolutionary and focused “not in securing social justice, but in covering up the ugly fissures of society.”²⁰⁵ Further, he described Gandhism as a “dangerous doctrine” that hushed “up real issues and (...) deceives the masses and encourages the upper classes to continue their domination.”²⁰⁶ In line with a common leftist critique of Gandhi during the 1930s, JP declared that the Mahatma implicitly condoned the structural violence of India’s economic inequality:

To the socialist, (Gandhi’s) philosophy (of trusteeship) amounts to deception—self-deception and deception of the exploited peoples. (...) Nor only are the higher classes guilty of theft; they are guilty also of violence. (...) By not questioning the right of the prince, landlord and capitalist to continue their functions, Gandhiji has signified his tacit approval of this large-scale, organized theft and violence. Nay, the approval is not tacit; it is open and avowed.²⁰⁷

In spite of this virulent condemnation, JP would mollify his criticism of Gandhi during the following years, in part due to the CSP’s growing relegation inside the Congress’ ranks after 1937. As the decade neared its end, Nehru, who had been an early advocate of socialism in India, gradually seasoned his leftist spirits and folded to Gandhi’s leadership. This, along with the Mahatma’s open rejection of the socialist program of revolution, cornered the socialists, and considerably reduced their political influence. By the end of the decade, JP had realized that Gandhi was to remain the undisputed leader of the nationalist movement. Following upon his conviction that the Congress represented the only vehicle for nationalist liberation, by 1940 he had substantially tempered his criticism of the Mahatma and modified his stance as leader of the CSP. In a response to an article published by Gandhi in his newspaper *Harijan* in January 1940, in which the Mahatma reaffirmed his rejection of the CSP’s goals, JP stated the following:

(Gandhi) draws his inspiration from God. Few men in history have claimed to do so, and they have been great men who have moved peoples and made history. We have no God. History is our only

²⁰⁵ “Why Socialism?”, in *ibid.*, Vol. II (1935-1939): 50.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

guide and its science our only inspiration. But Mahatma Gandhi is making history. He is a stupendous force of history. We must march with history.²⁰⁸

Despite having stated his willingness to line up behind Gandhi, JP remained evidently reluctant to accept Gandhi's project in its entirety. A couple of weeks later, he declared:

The merit of revolution is that while it destroys the established state it also creates a new one strong enough to take its place. Does Gandhiji fear that such a revolution is not possible in India today?²⁰⁹

A possible answer to this rhetorical question—and the key to understanding the essence of the seemingly impassable disagreement during the 1930s between JP and the leftists on the one hand and Gandhi on the other—can be extracted from analysing the incompatibility between revolutionary anticolonial socialism and Gandhi's deep suspicion and total rejection of the inherent idealism of modern politics, a theme developed recently by Faisal Devji and Uday S. Mehta in relation to the Mahatma's reading of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Regarding the potency of Gandhi's political defiance of the colonial state, Mehta poses that the Mahatma's attempts to "sever action (and) the everyday from any essential teleology" and his efforts to conceive of an alternative for politics as the ground for social well-being must be seen not only as a politics of anticolonial opposition, but as a fundamental challenge to modern notions of political action. For Mehta, Gandhi's questioning of political idealism radically denied the a priori conditions for any political action.²¹⁰ In a close vein, Devji has described Gandhian non-violence as a practice that "stood apart from politics conceived as the practice of conjuring up some future." For Gandhi, Devji argues, the present was seen as the primordial site for freedom and could not be sacrificed in the name of an uncertain future.²¹¹ The Gandhian focus on moral action as an end in itself in detriment of an idealized future forged through instrumental political

²⁰⁸ "Comment on Gandhi's article entitled 'The Dissentients'", *National Herald*, 26 Jan 1940.

²⁰⁹ "Where I Differ from Mahatma", *National Herald*, 7 Feb 1940.

²¹⁰ Uday S. Mehta, "Gandhi on Democracy, Politics and the Ethics of Everyday Life," in *Political Thought in Action. The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, ed. Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 91-2.

²¹¹ Faisal Devji, "Morality in the Shadow of Politics," in *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, ed. Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 107-8.

action proved incomprehensible for the young JP, focused as he was on reviving the revolutionary voluntarism of *swadeshi* through the logic of Marxist socialism, as well as for the rest of the left-wingers of the Congress.

In this sense, the politics of JP during the 1930s could not be more distanced from those of Gandhi, the inspirer of the event that marked the beginning of his involvement in politics. Indeed, it could not be otherwise: JP's politics were based on a combination of Marxist class struggle dialectics and anti-imperialist revolutionary discourse, and hinged on the potentialities of direct mass action, while Gandhi focused primarily on the innocence of means as a way of assuring the attainment of true *swaraj*. In direct opposition to the militant impatience of the 1920s, to which JP and the Congress leftists were direct heirs, the Mahatma stressed the power of patience to over revolutionary eagerness that, all too often, derived in coercion. In response to a letter sent by Nehru, urging him to endorse the more radical and egalitarian economic programme of the Congress left in 1933, Gandhi answered:

I know that though there is such an agreement between you and me in the enunciation of ideals, there are temperamental differences between us. (...) I have, therefore, concerned myself principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. I know that if we can take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured. I feel too that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means. If we can give an ocular demonstration of our uttermost truthfulness and non-violence, I am convinced that our statement of the national goal cannot long offend the interests which your letter would appear to attack. We know that the princes, the *zamindars*, and those who depend for their existence upon the exploitation of the masses, would cease to fear and distrust us, if we could but ensure the innocence of our methods. We do not seek to coerce any. We seek to convert them. This method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but I am convinced that it is the shortest.²¹²

In stark contrast to Gandhi's concerns with the purity of means and the need to convert "those who depend for their existence upon the exploitation of the masses" as a way of attaining true *swaraj*, for JP the nationalist struggle had

²¹² M. K. Gandh, "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru," in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1933). Cited in Mantena, "Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence," 458.

to be seen merely as a stage in the broader path to socialism. The obtainment of *swaraj* in India was seen as a necessary step in the revolution towards socialism; thus independence had to be supplemented by the “abolition of the *zamindari* system” and “princedom” so that *swaraj* in India could contribute to the eventual “abolition of capitalism”.²¹³ In this respect, JP’s investment in revolutionary socialism during the 1930s and 1940s can be contrasted with Gandhi’s project in yet another crucial point. As was argued chapter 2, communitarian responses to the questions raised around the issue of the agent of political change during the late nineteenth century—which began to be thought of in terms of the masses, the millions, the people, the labour and the proletariat of India—coalesced around what I have termed the national multitude during the first two decades of the twentieth. This, in turn, was presented in Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* and the writings of other radical thinkers as a result of an entity generated by the unity of Indian civilization—a construction defined in terms of a common set of moral duties—and was not thought of as the agent of global change. Thus, and despite being attuned to contemporaneous anticolonial struggles outside India, early twentieth century Indian nationalism was necessarily conceived as a provincial project that hinged on bringing India and the multiplicity of Indians together to oppose the discriminating pretended universality of liberalism, embodied in the despotic colonial state. Therefore, JP’s stance as a socialist ideologue and leader during the two decades prior to the transfer of power appears as a deviation from the principles of early XX century radical nationalism, such as these were crystallised in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Moreover, his vehement defence of anticolonial socialism was consciously thought as the overcoming of *satyagraha* through direct revolutionary action, violent if needed be.

Finally, the socialism JP defended during this stage was not anti-statist; rather, it was a project aimed at the creation of a truly revolutionary state, following the example of the Soviet Union. In light of his life-long involvement with radical politics, it could be said that socialism was the only kind of *raj niti* JP vouched for, and, at least during the 1930s and 40s, the post-*swadeshi* Congress

²¹³ “My Picture of Socialism”, *Janata*, 24 November, 1946.

was in his mind the only body through which the revolutionary potentialities of institutional politics could be exploited. During the following years, he would gradually disown orthodox scientific socialism and drift towards a new approach based on a rejection of materialism as the basis for politics. Indeed, his defection from the group formed by the Congress socialists would coincide with his abandonment of *raj niti* practices, and, consequently, of socialism as his favoured programme for revolution. These arguments will be further developed in the following chapter.

As we saw in the beginning of this section, for JP socialism meant not only the solution for India's problems of poverty and inequality, it was also the "warp and woof" of the struggle for national liberation: "It colours it, it gives it direction, it provides it with an edge of Idealism (sic.)."²¹⁴ This emphasis would be shared by most of those Congressmen considered Leftists during the last decades before independence. However, during the 1930s and 40s, the internal strives of the Congress relegated socialism to a relative marginality in nationalist circles, in which figures like JP remained in the background. As has been argued, the gulf dividing his conception of political change and that of Gandhi's during the 1930s and beginning of the 1940s could hardly be wider. During the following years, this disagreement would overflow the limits of a mere political confrontation to become a personal antagonism marked by bitterness. In the following section I will analyse this process of increasing polarization, as well as JP's gradual distancing from the Congress and the beginning of his eventual disillusionment with party politics altogether.

3.2.2 1940-1947: Turning Away from Materialism to Fend Off the Forces of Reaction.

*Nothing but blood, toil and tears shall be our lot, but out of that shall emerge the freedom of our land and people—a Free India and therefore a new world! Long Live Our Revolution!*²¹⁵

-Jayaprakash Narayan, 1943

²¹⁴ "First Things First", *Congress Socialist*, 26 December 1936.

²¹⁵ "To Students", 1943, Jayaprakash Narayan Papers, NMML.

*It seems to me to be unreasonable to plan with meticulous care the production of pigs, for instance, but to leave it to blind social forces to produce man.*²¹⁶

-Jayaprakash Narayan, 1944

The opening years of the 1940s mark the peak of JP's revolutionary impetus and of his antagonism towards Gandhi's politics of non-violence. Between 1941 and 1943, his fame as one of the most radical leaders of the nationalist movement grew considerably, turning him into a popular figure beyond the circle of the Congress left. In April 1941 he was arrested and taken to Deoli detention camp in Rajasthan, where he would share his imprisonment with famous left-wingers like S. A. Dange. On October of that year, JP would be among the leaders of a group of over two hundred inmates staging a hunger strike to denounce the conditions at Deoli. Considerable press coverage awarded to the protest and Gandhi's open support turned it into a national event, placing JP on the spotlight. His fame was to grow considerably when news of his heroic break from prison in November 1942 spread along with descriptions of an epic escape by foot across hundreds of miles, accomplished despite having suffered serious injury to his back. With most of the Congress high command behind bars as a result of the crack down on nationalist leadership following Gandhi's inauguration of the Quit India movement in August 1942, JP's status as a nationalist leader steadily rose, and his legend as a revolutionary grew dramatically, especially among groups of young men in awe of his role in attacks against post offices, telegraph lines and railway stations during this time.²¹⁷

During the early 1940s, as his insistence on revolution became increasingly impetuous, JP would position himself in direct and open defiance of the Raj, Gandhi and the Congress. For JP, the increasing social unrest that followed the start of Quit India called for a revival of the "incalculable heroism and sublime martyrdom" that characterized the event of Non-Cooperation, described

²¹⁶ "The Bricks of Society", 22 July 1944, *In the Lahore Fort: Random Jottings and Letters*, Bimal Prasad, ed. Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, vol. Vol. III (1939-1946) (Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 197.

²¹⁷ Ajit Bhattacharjee, *Jayaprakash Narayan : A Political Biography* (Delhi: Vikas, 1975), 80-82.; Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 153-80.; Lakshmi Narain Lal, *Jayaprakash : India's Voice, India's Soul* (New Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1977), 108-10.

as “the most glorious page in the living history of (India’s) National Revolution.”²¹⁸

In a dispatch written in 1943 JP used the Quit India resolution of the All India Congress Committee, signed in Bombay on 8 August 1942, as a cue to resume what had been one of his most cherished convictions since his return to India in 1929—namely, that the Congress should represent the spearhead of revolution in India:

My own interpretation of the Congress position—not of Gandhiji’s—is clear and definite. Congress is prepared to fight aggression violently if the country became independent. Well, we have declared ourselves independent, and also named Britain as an aggressive power; we are, therefore, justified within the terms of the Bombay resolution itself to fight Britain with arms. If this does not accord with Gandhiji’s principles, that is not my fault. (...) We should only be discharging our duties in the light of our own reason.

In further rebuff of Gandhi, JP concluded that he would “not allow cowardice, clothed in Shastric subtleties, to block the development of this revolution and lead to its failure.”²¹⁹ Up to 1943, he openly welcomed violence and tagged those opposed to his fiery message as “weaklings and cowards”, “traitors” who had to be chucked out of the way of revolution.²²⁰ This escalation in tone progressed in direct proportion to his antagonism towards Gandhi’s non-violent methods.

However, between 1943 and 1944, the traumatic experience of torture and solitary confinement would contribute to a drastic swerve in his thought, which would, after 1944, gradually turn to the problem of alienation and the limitations of a materialist approach to politics. In the following years he gradually disowned Marxist orthodoxy and drifted towards a more flexible position, marked by an acknowledgement of the importance of Gandhi’s politics, and the renewal of early XX century political thrusts that focused on the urgent need to transform society for the purpose of autonomy.

²¹⁸ “To Students”, 1943.

²¹⁹ “To all Fighters for Freedom (1)”, February 1943, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. III (1939-1946), 115.

²²⁰ “To all Fighters for Freedom (2)”, 1 September 1943, in *ibid.*, 119.

In early 1943, JP travelled as a fugitive to the mountains of Nepal, where he met and joined the guerrilla liberation movement Azad Dasta, but was soon captured and sent as a prisoner to Delhi. Following a second successful escape, he was again captured in June and sent to the Lahore Fort Prison, where, for the following two months, he would be unendingly questioned regarding the activities of other socialists and radical groups.²²¹ Although JP produced no elaborate personal description of the events of his captivity at Lahore Fort, his brother described to his biographers episodes of torture to which he was victim, including extended sleep deprivation, and being tied to a block of ice for two entire days. Out of the sixteen months of his enclosure at Lahore Fort, eleven were spent in solitary confinement.²²² During this time he kept a journal, later published under the title *Inside the Lahore Fort*, in which it is possible to discern a major transformation of his political position and the sense of his role as a leader and thinker. The texts included in these prison notebooks reflect JP's moving away from the fiery defence of revolution that had marked his politics during the 1930s, and the beginning of an unprecedented concern with ethics, morality, and what he termed "the human aspect" of politics and life more broadly. The new direction adopted by his thought during these crucial years differed markedly from his unwavering allegiance to scientific socialism during the 1930s:

(I)t is not sufficient to pay attention to the material aspects of life alone. The human aspect, though not urgently demanding our present attention, is perhaps even more important than that of material well-being. The human aspect, which I have in mind, goes beyond the question of social relationship which indeed will be largely, if not wholly, dictated by the nature of the economic organisation (sic.); it goes beyond that of education and art and culture. That aspect goes deeper than all these and is their basis (...). We socialists (...) believed complacently that when economic life had been socialized and (...) exploitation removed from society, man in the course of the social process would evolve automatically into a paragon of virtues. (...) (P)olitical freedom and economic

²²¹ JP gives an account of his time in Nepal and his eventual capture in his Oral History Interview with Arun Gandhi. University of Cambridge, Centre for South Asian Studies Archive, Oral History Collection.

²²² Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 156-61.

regeneration and prosperity should not be the only two aims of our nation-builders.²²³

In this paragraph, which sets the tone for the rest of the notes produced inside Lahore Fort, it is possible to discern a crucial break away from Marxist orthodoxy, the first signs of his distancing from his old socialist comrades, and the emergence of a political outlook concerned with going beyond mere “political freedom and economic regeneration”. In this sense, the period of 1943-44 was marked by a transformation that went beyond the change of ideological positions and involved a more radical psychological transformation.

A deep sense of the hopelessness of politics looms over these writings, as well as a feeling of personal loneliness and deep disenchantment with the Congress and its Gandhian leadership. In an uncommonly intimate text written in August 1944, JP declared:

I know it is fruitless to be embittered and, perhaps, I take things too seriously. Perhaps my fundamentally socialist way of looking at things leads to my being so completely possessed with political issues of the moment. Anyway, I cannot shake off this bitterness that daily eats into my being. I cannot say if in the end I should not find myself bidding good-bye to Congress politics to dedicate myself entirely to the labour and socialist movements, such as they may be.²²⁴

As a whole, the jottings found in the Lahore notebooks can be seen to hold the bud of his turning away from *raj niti*—or power politics—a process that would culminate in the 1950s with his complete dedication to *lok niti* constructive work. The actual beginning of his estrangement from party and institutional politics can be found in his gradual rejection of the Congress that took place in the years immediately before the end of colonial rule. During this period JP extended his attacks against the right-wingers of the Congress, a group in which he included Gandhi, and developed an open critique of the whole Congress. Similarly, he vocally denounced the adoption of Gandhi’s banner of non-violence by certain groups as a way of garnering influence and power inside the party. In his view, the leading members of the Congress had betrayed the organization’s

²²³ “In the Lahore Fort: Random Jottings and Letters”, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. III (1939-1946), 197.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

original revolutionary potential as a result of their “petty ambitions, intrigues”, and their unbridled focus on “power politics.” As a result, he concluded that the Congress had “forsaken its fundamental task of serving the people (...) and preparing them for (...) *swaraj*.”²²⁵ JP saw this process as the result of a fundamental betrayal of the “character” of the Congress, a body that, in his view, had been created for the purpose of “fighting”, not “ruling”. Consistent with his socialist outlook, JP interpreted the corruption of the Congress as the inevitable result of class conflict at its bosom:

There is a difference between the Congress as a fighting organization and as a ruling body. So long as it was a fighting force, there was room in it for everyone, whether rich or poor. (...) After power has come into Congress hands, when the Congress has become a ruling party, it finds it cannot maintain that character. It cannot ignore the conflict of interests within itself. (...) The Congress has therefore to make up its mind. The Congress after becoming a ruling party cannot say that there is room for capitalists and workers alike in it. (...) Rich Congressmen have already corrupted the Congress. (...) They alone can afford to buy *khadi*. (...) Rather than let this great organization which we built with our blood and our sweat be captured by those who will corrupt and make it betray the causes for which it stood, the Congress must dissolve itself. (...) This great organization should not be dragged into the mire of power politics.²²⁶

Curiously, JP drew close to Gandhi despite all their differences when it came to this last issue: both argued that the Congress, having served as the main vehicle for national liberation, should disband and disappear once independence was attained. JP framed this proposition in what would later become one of the leitmotifs of his politics of protest: the rejection—both moral and practical—of *raj niti*. For him, the corruption of the Congress represented the main cause for the expansion of caste conflict, communalism and the growth of extremist groups such as the RSS. In short, the Congress had stopped acting like “a national organization with the one aim of winning freedom” and had turned into a mere “party (and defending) a definite programme.”²²⁷

²²⁵ “The A.I.C.C Session, Where Leadership Failed”, *Janata*, 21 July 1946.

²²⁶ Address at Coimbatore District Textile Workers’ Conference, 18 April 1947, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. IV (1946-1948), 138-39.

²²⁷ Address to the Socialist Autumn School of Politics, Chapra, 4 November 1947, in *ibid.*, 191.

By early 1947, the consolidation of the transformation began in 1943 and the adoption of a new stance is clearly discernible in JP's writings. In a tract on the topic of the transition to socialism published in January 1947, JP summed up his onset against the corruption of the Congress by identifying the party with what he termed the forces of reaction within Indian society. He argued that "Indian society, with its princes and nawabs, its landlords, its higher and lower castes and its untouchables (was) wholly undemocratic both in spirit and in fact."²²⁸ In this respect, he suggested, the India of 1947 was very similar to Russia right before the fall of Tsarism. Nevertheless, by this moment JP rejected the Leninist path of revolution and emphasized the need for the gradual development of a true democracy that could only come into being through the unfolding of socialism. The transition to socialism, in his view, was the only path open for the peaceful obtainment of *swaraj* in India. This transition, however, could not be effected through the state, but could only come as a result of a transformation in society.

It is here that JP introduces one final gloss to his ductile approach to socialism, which, after 1947, he started associating with the moral imperative to oppose the undemocratic forces latent in Indian society. Such an opposition was the only way of securing a peaceful transit to independence. On the contrary, if concessions were made to these forces of reaction "with regard to the basic principles of our national life (the) result (would be) such a sickly and diseased India that life for her would be hardly worth living."²²⁹ His conclusion was that the revolution India needed could not be violent and swift, but rather a gradual and peaceful process, "a period of gestation", from which the socialist India of the future would emerge.

This was the beginning of a new and defused approach to revolution. Despite retaining socialism as the goal, by the late 1940s JP was advocating the need for a gradual transformation that focused on society as a way of revolutionizing politics. In this sense, he was recovering the anti-statist thrust of

²²⁸ *The Transition to Socialism*, in *ibid.*, 104.

²²⁹ Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, 107.

early XX century radicalism while also, with his surrender of the project of violent revolution, drawing closer to Gandhi's insistence regarding the need to renounce the violence and instrumentalism and idealism central to modern politics in favour of a deeper transformation of society. Despite his previous virulent rejection of Gandhi's methods and positions, by 1947 JP seems to be hinting at the desirability of embracing the Mahatma's politics and joining them with the outlook of socialism.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that, in spite of his clear drift towards Gandhian thought and his move away from Marxist orthodoxy, for JP socialism remained the goal of every progressive politics, even of those coded through the logic of Gandhi's thought. This fixation with socialism as the goal appears clearly in a pamphlet published in 1951, where he brought "democratic socialism and Gandhism" together and described them as "the forces of social revolution and peace" in India. In his view, both universes came together in their wish "to preserve individual freedom and ensure the dignity of the human personality", and both represented the only hope for the creation of a "classless, casteless, non-exploitative, co-operative, or, in other words, socialist society."²³⁰

3.3 Conclusions

In this chapter I have posited that, during the 1930s and early 1940s, JP sought to complement the oppositional thrust of early XX century Indian nationalist politics through the defence of the project of social equality, self-rule and the building of a new and more just civilization yielded by scientific socialism. In this sense, up to the mid 1940s, his was at base a very non-Gandhian project, based on a Western modern conception of progress and closer to that of Nehru and the left-wingers of the Congress. I have also argued that the young JP defended socialism essentially as a politics of and for the popular masses and the people. In this sense, the socialism of JP in the 1930s developed as the result of the combination of his engagement with earlier debates on socialism in India and his adherence the populist logic and antipolitical thrust of early XX century radical

²³⁰ Jayaprakash Narayan, "Political Trends," (Socialist Party, 1951).

Indian nationalism. Furthermore, JP thought of socialism as the only valid goal of nationalism and the only truly effective revolutionary ideology for anti-colonialism. With regards to the Congress, during the 1930s socialism was seen as the only ideology capable of leading the party back to its lost revolutionary essence, embodied in the anti-colonial agitations of the early XX century. In relation to all this issues, the socialism of the young JP must be seen as an emancipatory project that was to give way to his later commitment to *lok niti*.

JP's defence of socialism during the 1930s and 40s brought him in direct confrontation with Gandhi. While the former's politics were based on a combination of Marxist class struggle dialectics and an anti-imperialist revolutionary discourse that hinged on the potentialities of direct mass action, Gandhi focused primarily on the "innocence of means" as a way of assuring the attainment of true *swaraj*. Moreover, JP saw the vehement defence of direct action as the only way of overcoming the shortcomings of *satyagraha*.

However, JP's initial distancing from socialist programmes of violent revolution is clear by the second half of the 1940s. By focusing on his writings during the period of stressful incarceration in the Lahore Fort Prison, it is possible to get a glimpse of the first signs of his rejection of orthodox Marxism, and of a re-embrace of some of the notions defended by early interpreters of socialism in India, like Lala Lajpat Rai and Annie Besant, who were concerned with the alienation caused by the socioeconomic dynamics of modern western civilization. Thereafter, the core of his thought would drift decisively towards a rejection of materialism, and an engagement with ethical and moral considerations.

This change in his thought marks the beginning of a gradual rethinking of Gandhi's position marked by JP's recognition of the desirability of some the Mahatma's principles. Indeed, there were a few crucial points on which both figures agreed upon during the last years of colonial rule, notably the conviction regarding the need to disband the Congress after the attainment of independence and of going beyond the merely material and economic aspects of politics. However, up until Gandhi's death, JP would be consistently critical of the

Mahatma's programme, which he equated with a defence of the forces of reaction inside the society of India that socialism sought to oppose and defeat.

As we will see in the following chapter, his efforts to make socialism equivalent with a politics focused on the opposition to the forces of reaction must be seen as an embryonic stage of his later turn away from power politics and the development of his project of *lok niti*. However, it must be made clear that by the end of the 1940s he was still thinking very much in terms of party politics. The clearest indication of this is the fact that his tract *Transition to Socialism* was meant to serve as a starting point for the programme of the Socialist Party, a new group formed out of the deceased CSP founded in 1934.

During the 1930s and early 1940s socialism was the system through which he sought to radicalize nationalist politics in India. JP was only interested in socialism as a way of transforming the state and power politics: the moment he decided to abandon the Congress and desist in his involvement with power politics, he also abandoned socialism. Socialism, we could venture, was the only kind or *raj niti* he ever acknowledged.

In conclusion, while his political thought remained articulated through the logic of parties and institutions, it is clear that by the end of the 1940s JP was already drifting decisively towards *lok niti*. If, as has been have established, Gandhi's Non-Cooperation provided the event that created the fidelity that propelled JP into politics, socialism must be seen as the framework through which he would conceive of social transformation throughout his life, even following his reconciliation with Gandhian methods in his later years. Indeed, as I will try to make clear in the course of the next chapter, Marxism and the ideas of Gandhi for JP were little more than systems of interpretation that should be combined for the promotion of a truly revolutionary political practice. In this sense, we suggest that for JP they were both subordinated to the broad project of revolution against power politics defined as *lok niti*.

4. The Birth of *Lok Niti*: Anti-Statism, Constructive Work and JP's Path from Socialism to *Sarvodaya*. (1948-1957)

*A real revolution is a revolution in the values of life. No law can effect a transvaluation of values.*²³¹

-Jayaprakash Narayan, 1953

The main objective of this chapter is to chart the definitive transition of Jayaprakash's politics from an outright and orthodox defence of the goals of revolutionary socialism to the defence of the political culture of *lok niti*. He would first use the expression in 1954 as part of his announced devotion to Vinoba Bhave's *bhoodan* movement. Thereafter, he would consistently use it to refer to a political culture marked by the pre-eminence of moral action and constructive work over structured agendas and to articulate projects based on claims like the denunciation of corruption and the attack on the procedures, symbols and workings of *raj niti*, the politics of kingly, *zamindari* and state power, described as distant, arbitrary, unjust and alienating.

The opening section is devoted to charting out two parallel processes with regards to JP's turn towards *lok niti*. The first deals with his definitive rejection of the state as a site for political transformation. The defence of this anti-statist position, however, did not mean a surrender of socialism. Rather, I will show that it implied an effort to reconcile the goals of socialism with the teachings of Gandhi in favour of the overcoming of the alienation generated by modern political and social statist-industrial formations. Indeed, during the years dealt with in this chapter, JP came to equate the Gandhian ideal of *sarvodaya* as the true form of people's socialism. This process was complemented by his drift towards an antipolitical stance that sought to purify the realm of politics through the promotion of "incentives for goodness" as the motor of an authentic socio-political transformation. Both of these processes meant focusing on society as the privileged site of politics and transformation.

²³¹ "A Plea for Gandhism", Article in *Janata*, published sometime in 1953, in Bajwa, *Jayaprakash Narayan and Indian Politics*, 119.

The second section engages with the birth of the political culture of *lok niti* as a result of the processes described above and of JP's increasing focus on the need to protest against what he saw as the harmful inclinations of the postcolonial state. This section focuses on the importance of JP's involvement with the *bhoodan* movement during the 1950s and 60s, as well as on the ways in which the anti-statism he nurtured during these years brought him into conflict with the bearers of institutional and state power after 1947. Likewise, this section engages with JP's views on the relevance of *sarvodaya* as a complement to the programme of socialism.

The final section concludes the chapter with a discussion of the affinities and contrasts between JP's defence of *lok niti* during these years and the programme of the RSS, and the ways in which both can be seen as precursors to forms of non-statist and pluralist action developed in more recent decades that seem less interested in capturing state power and more invested in the transformation of social and political attitudes through acts of everyday resistance.²³²

4.1 *The twisted dreams of humankind*

4.1.1 Marx, Gandhi and the framework of alienation

Gandhiji was a social phenomenon which Socialism must understand rather than explain away. The post-Gandhi world can never go on as if there never had been a Gandhi. (...) Gandhiji was not a Marxist. He was himself. Marx too was no Marxist. He was himself. Both were primarily men of action though both were profound in ideas.
-Jayaprakash Narayan, January 1949²³³

The last years of the Raj marked a period of intense activity for Jayaprakash Narayan. During this time he would tirelessly travel across India promoting the goals of socialism and inciting revolution. Established as the most visible leader of the Congress left wing, and enjoying widespread popularity as a result of his famous and heroic escape from prison in 1942, his support for radical revolutionary groups, and his endurance of torture at the hands of the

²³² Rao, *Third World Protest : Between Home and the World*, 147.

²³³ "Gandhi and Socialism", *Janata*, 30 January 1949.

British, he was seen by many as the inheritor of the revolutionary mantle of Subhas Chandra Bose, and the stalwart of nationalist radicalism. At this moment of widespread popularity, he was invited to become president of the All-India Postal Employees, All India Railwaymen's Federation, All-Ordinance Factories' Union and Defence Employees Union and Defence Employees Union, the largest trades unions in Asia, making him one of the "most powerful and influential labour leaders in the world", potentially able to "paralyse the oppressive machinery of the British Raj(...) with a general strike."²³⁴ Given the tremendous growth of his stature as a national leader, he would be invited by Nehru, along with his fellow socialist Lohia, to return to the Congress Working Committee. Both rejected the invitation, and harshly criticised what they perceived to be the growing accommodation of the British on the part of the Congress. Furthermore, JP and the erstwhile Congress socialists would openly reject the invitation to take part in the debates of the newly formed Constituent Assembly, a decision that would further alienate them from most of the members of the party, and other political factions such as those headed by Dr. Ambedkar.

Since his release from Lahore Fort prison, JP had focused solely on the urgency of revolution, and had not given much thought to the increasing tensions generated by the growth of communalism across India. Likewise, as we saw in the last chapter, he had begun to reflect critically upon the excessive materialism of socialist orthodoxy, and to worry about the neglect inherent to institutional and party politics regarding the more human aspects of politics. The violence of Partition and the assassination of Gandhi barely a year after, would intensify his scepticism regarding the excessive focus on materialism prevalent among Indian political leaders, and contribute to a process of definite estrangement from all forms of institutional politics, which he would start referring to as *raj niti*. This process would be coupled by a gradual rapprochement to the thought, figure, and practice of Gandhi. During the decade following the transfer of power he would engage in the chore of reconciling his socialist convictions with a political practice capable of going beyond the limitations of *raj niti*.

²³⁴ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 179.

In an address given in 1947 at a conference of the Socialist Party—the offshoot of the Congress Socialist Party—Jayaprakash spoke against those who claimed that “the Socialist way and Gandhiji’s way” were opposed to each other. In fact, he went on, “(t)he Socialists (were) very close to the Gandhites (sic.) who (were) not connected with power politics but (were) engaged in (...) constructive programmes.”²³⁵ The next year, JP would argue further on the need to bring socialism and Gandhism together in the task of countering the decadence of the Congress, which by then had become the ruling party of the new national state. In his view, the Congress had “deviated from its true path”²³⁶, and had ceased to represent “the conscience of the people.” Instead, it had become “so identified with the government (...) that it ha(d) lost the power to protect the rights of the people.”²³⁷

In a re-actualization of the thrust of the radical politics of early XX century Indian nationalism, JP would declare that it was the duty of those who sought to prevent the development of totalitarianism in India to nurture an anti-statist opposition. In this respect, he declared that it was necessary to “accustom the people to the idea that to be opposed to the Congress (was) not to be opposed to the nation”²³⁸, but, rather, to be in favour of the authentic transformation of society. In the midst of the havoc that had accompanied the transfer of power and the attainment of self-rule, socialism remained, in his view, the only programme capable of nurturing a virtuous society. However, this was a renewed approach to socialism in which anti-statist action began to be seen as the best way to promote an emphasis on the “human aspects” of politics. Now that political independence was a reality, the time was ripe for the development of a true social revolution capable of leading the way in this direction. Despite having defended a position in which the only way of effecting a revolution went through

²³⁵ Presidential address at Delhi Provincial Political Conference, 30 June 1947, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. IV (1946-1948), 166-7.

²³⁶ Annual Report of the General Secretary, Socialist Party, Sixth Annual Conference, Nasik, 19-21 March 1948, in *ibid.*, 234.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 236

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 238.

the conquest of the state for over a decade, in 1948 JP would acknowledge the necessity of promoting revolution beyond the limits of the state:

Looking back it seems to me that we would have done well to associate ourselves with the constructive work of the Congress to a far greater extent than we did. We were responsible—and I more than others perhaps—in creating the feeling that all constructive work was unrevolutionary (sic.), and for socialists, a waste of time. (...) I should like to put on record that that was an immature and mistaken view.²³⁹

At this point, it is possible to perceive a near total inversion of his former position regarding the conquering of the state. If, during the 1930s and early 40s, he had defended a project of leading a socialist transformation of society from the heights of the state, now he was openly advocating for a project of transformation of the state through the transformation of society:

(I)f we succeed by constructive work in creating a sound trade union movement capable of running industry; in educating the working class in the arts of citizenship; in creating co-operative communities in the villages; in mobilizing the youth and children as voluntary servants of the nation; in creating cultural influences that go down even to the most backward sections of the people; if we succeed in erradicating caste, superstition and bigotry; if we succeed in enlisting the co-operation of hundreds of thousands of selfless workers to whom the seats of power offer no attraction—if we succeed in all this, we shall also succeed in building up a socialist society. In this event, the State will inevitably become a socialist State(...).

The state, he went on, should be forced to become “an instrument in the hands of a popular socialist movement (...) rather than the source and fountain-head of all authority and will.”²⁴⁰ It was in this emphatic rejection of the state as the goal of politics that JP saw the first links between the ideas of Gandhi and Marx, since both, he noted, defended as “the highest stage of democracy (...) that in which the state had withered away.”²⁴¹

Despite having openly rejected the ideal of *ahimsa* as early as 1946 by declaring that given the possibility of non-violence he preferred to “fight with a

²³⁹ Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, 230.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 241.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 240.

gun”²⁴², JP’s renewed embrace of Gandhi would become evident by the end of 1948. Following the assassination of the Mahatma, and his own gradual process of rejection of the conversion of the Congress from revolutionary organization to state party, JP would begin insisting on the importance of the contributions made by Gandhi to the arsenal of revolutionary technologies available to those willing to give their lives for the transformation of society. A few years later he would ask his socialist comrades to remain receptive to the revolutionary heritage of Gandhi, and, quoting Lenin, he would insist on combining it with the revolutionary thought of Karl Marx:

Lenin had once said that Marxism is a confluence of three streams of ideas: Marx took classical economics from England, revolutionary socialism from France and philosophy from Germany and achieved a synthesis of his own. (...) Why should we not combine the Marxian thought with the thought and practice of Mahatma Gandhi and achieve a synthesis of our own?²⁴³

How can this open acceptance of Gandhi’s thought and practice be accounted for, especially given that, as we have seen, the Mahatma was the target of such harsh criticism from leftist circles ever since the late 1920s? Should we see in JP’s acceptance of Gandhi a cancellation of his former commitment to revolutionary socialism? Or, is there more to this apparent conversion than a mere contradiction borne out of the disenchantment with the excessive materialism of socialism? I suggest that a productive and illuminating way of approaching JP’s embrace of Gandhi and his efforts to couple it with socialism after 1948 can be achieved by taking into account the framework developed by the philosopher Akeel Bilgrami for thinking about the affinities between Gandhi and Marx.

Bilgrami has argued that both figures participated in a common project of intellectual dissent that looked to replace the concepts of liberty and equality from the centre stage of political debate. This effort represented an attempt to disinherit the entire bourgeois liberal tradition of thought that emerged from the ashes of the French Revolution, and demanded a search for a “more

²⁴² Speech at Public Meeting, Patna, 21 April 1946, *ibid.*, 4.

²⁴³ Speech on the Chairman’s Address (by Rammanohar Lohia), at the Pachmarhi Convention of the Socialist Party, 24 May 1952, in *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, 234.

fundamental and primitive concept” to place at the core of any doctrine of socio-political analysis and transformation. This prior concept, Bilgrami argues, was that of an “*unalienated* life.”²⁴⁴ According to Bilgrami, Marx and Gandhi shared a common diagnosis regarding the alienation caused by the transformation of human subjects into mere objects caused by modern industrial civilization, a process that both saw as entailing the loss of genuine subjectivity and subjective engagement with the world and its inhabitants. Marx’s analysis was concerned with devising ways of resisting the eroding power of capitalism, while Gandhi focused on the need to avoid for India the path of European civilizational tendencies.

In Bilgrami’s view, early modern notions of scientific rationality—which he refers to as “thick” notions and describes as outlining a predatory approach in which nature, including its human inhabitants, is viewed as lacking any intrinsic value and merely as something to be conquered and exploited²⁴⁵—gave sanction to a certain enlightened intellectual tradition that conceived of the world as, to use Max Weber’s famous phrase, disenchanted. This strand of Enlightenment thought, Bilgrami argues, erected its supremacy by simultaneously appealing to such “thick” notions of rationality and tarnishing any radical questioning of its orthodoxy with charges of irrationalism.²⁴⁶ Despite this onslaught, a tradition of dissent based on a conception of the world not as brute, disenchanted matter, but as suffused with intrinsic value, developed, which insisted on an un-alienated relation with nature and other human beings. In order to be truly un-alienated, such relations had to be based on ethic demands and moral responses, rather than an impersonal quest for endless profit.

Bilgrami’s emphasis on issues of enchantment and alienation, notions that were important only in Marx’s early works and for which Gandhi seemed to have had no interest, can certainly be seen as an attempt to force a romanticized reading of both figures in favour of an argument for an organic social

²⁴⁴ Bilgrami, “Gandhi and Marx,” 7-8. Emphasis in original.

²⁴⁵ This idea is developed further in the following articles: *ibid*; “Gandhi, Newton, and the Enlightenment;” “Gandhi, the Philosopher;” “Occidentalism, the Very Idea: An Essay on Enlightenment and Enchantment,” *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 2 (2006).

²⁴⁶ “Gandhi, Newton, and the Enlightenment,” 17.

wholeness.²⁴⁷ However, unhelpful as Bilgrami's framework may be for a deeper understanding of the affinities between Gandhi and Marx, I want to argue that its usefulness for approaching JP's effort to bring both figures together during the 1950s is not diminished. I have focused on this approach precisely to highlight the way in which JP, who had repeatedly attacked Gandhi as a *politician* during the 1930s and early 40s, began to think of the Mahatma as a prophet of popular governance and people's power. In this sense, Gandhi and Marx, were, in JP's view, participating in a common project that focused on the power of society to transform political reality.

Bilgrami argues that Gandhi had an instinctive religious understanding of human life on earth—moulded, according to him, by bhakti, Gujarati Vaishnavite and Jain influences—that was paired with a deep pessimism regarding one of the “Enlightenment's most fundamental assumption(s)—that what is bad in us can be overcome by good politics.”²⁴⁸ It was precisely this combination that led him to reject not only a desacralized view of the world, but also to object to certain forms of modern technology, famously the railroads, “elite medicine, (...) the expertise of lawyers, and to centralised forms of governance which would inevitably be based on expertise rather than the norms and needs of localities.”²⁴⁹ Gandhi, Bilgrami concludes, rejected the forms of modern political economy and political governance that Western and westernized agents were keen to adapt to Indian conditions due to the fact that he saw in them “manifestations of an alienating process of deliberate desacralisation and (...) objectifying attitude of detachment towards nature and its inhabitants.”²⁵⁰

Jayaprakash Narayan can be situated at the opposite side of the spectrum regarding Gandhi's pessimism about politics and his religious outlook. Throughout his life, and despite the way his allegiances transited from a defence of the state to a devoted support for non-statist action, JP wouldn't waver on his faith regarding politics. In the previous chapter we observed that, in the early

²⁴⁷ I thank Faisal Devji for pointing this out for me.

²⁴⁸ Bilgrami, "Gandhi and Marx," 13.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 11.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 15.

1930s, JP would contrast the assumptions of socialism, described as a true “science of society(...)looked upon by millions of people the world over as their only guide and saviour”²⁵¹, with Gandhi’s notion of nonviolence, referred to in terms of an obscure doctrine of unclear religious meaning. Indeed, when Gandhi declared, in early 1940, that civil resistance in the face of the colonial state should be put on pause until God revealed a plan to him and gave him word “as He ha(d) done before,” and, further, stated that “He has been my sustaining Guide and had sustained me throughout my stormy life”²⁵², JP was swift to reply: “(Gandhi) draws his inspiration from God. Few men in history have claimed to do so (...). We have no god. History is our only guide and its science our only inspiration.”²⁵³ JP would remain sceptical of religion throughout his life. In a letter to Minoo Masani, written in 1944, he described himself as a “Godless person”.²⁵⁴

In his early approach to socialism, however, it is possible to perceive a concern with achieving a goal similar to that which Akeel Bilgrami describes as an unalienated life. The denunciation of the dangers of a socio-political programme based solely on “the dictates of profit”²⁵⁵ and his consistent stance in defence of more human forms of organization, which he conceived of in the form of cooperatives and local industries, remained constant since the early 1930s onwards. In fact, the final stage of his picture of socialism during this stage of his life was described as one in which “man will neither be slave to capitalism nor to a party or the State. Man will be free. He will have to serve society which will provide him with employment and the means of livelihood, but within limits he will be free to choose his avocation and station in life. He will be free to express his opinions and there will be opportunities for him to *rise to his full moral stature*.”²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ Letter to the General Secetry of the AICC, 20 July 1934, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. I (1929-1935), 70.

²⁵² Mahatma Gandhi, "The Dissenters," *Harijan*, 20 January 1940.

²⁵³ Comment on Gandhi’s article entitled ‘The Dissentients’, *National Herald*, 26 Jan 1940, in Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. III (1939-1946) (Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 28.

²⁵⁴ Letter to M. R. Masani, 8 February 1944, *ibid.*, 248.

²⁵⁵ “My Picture of Socialism”, *Janata*, 24 November 1946, *ibid.*, IV, (1946-1948): 82.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 87-8. Emphasis added.

Not being in the least religious, JP would develop a different approach to the problem of alienation than Gandhi. In the former's view, alienation could only be overcome through active political militancy, the defence of socialism, and a strife to re-empower people in the face of despotic and alienating power. Despite the seemingly unbridgeable distance between the outlook of the young JP and that of Gandhi during the 1930s, towards the end of the 1940s, and only after the death of the latter, a definite process of rapprochement began taking place between their differing stands, precisely around the issue of alienation. This process is clearly perceived in JP's following statement:

Gandhiji emphasized the need to change man in order to change society. Socialism recognizes that social change is not secured without changing man.²⁵⁷

Here, JP is echoing, in reference to Gandhi, the argumentative core of the young Marx's famous "Theses on Feuerbach" in which the author of *Capital* posited that change in the structures of society could only be achieved through a truly revolutionary practice that involved the transformation and liberation of individual subjectivity. This meant, for Marx, that a truly revolutionary practice could only be achieved through the coming together and simultaneity of the transformation of what we could call an internal reality—that of consciousness—and an external one—exemplified by capitalist structures of domination. Thus, following JP's estrangement from the excessive materialism of orthodox socialism, which as we have seen began to develop during his period of incarceration at Lahore Fort (1943-1945), it became possible for him to gradually reconcile his socialist convictions with the once resented praxis of the Mahatma, which "sought for truth not away from life, not beyond it, but within life itself." In a reversal of his former criticism of Gandhi, in which he was accused of being overly religious and unclear, JP now clearly saw the affinities between the Mahatma's and his own socialist project: "(Gandhi) sought for truth in action. He sought it through service of the lowly and the dispossessed." During the late 1940s, it would become clear to JP that "(s)ocialism too (was) a search for truth within life, in action and through service of the common man." And, further, that:

²⁵⁷ "Gandhi and Socialism", *Janata*, 30 January 1949.

Gandhiji was a revolutionary, not a philosopher. He was not primarily interested in merely understanding life but in changing it. He changed history. In his very death he set the pace of social change so fast that men of sturdy hearts lost courage and dropped by the roadside. (...) Socialism too is a revolutionary creed. By understanding society it endeavours to change it. (...) Gandhiji was a revolutionary because he had faith in the masses and believed in mass action. He was not a constitutionalist afraid to plunge society in turmoil. Socialism too believes in the masses and depends on mass action. (...) Gandhiji was a revolutionary because he had the courage of his convictions, took his logic to its end, and was not limited or inhibited by petty bourgeois prejudices. Socialism, too, has its inexorable logic and tears down the edifice of middle class Philistinism.²⁵⁸

JP's rapprochement with Gandhi following the latter's assassination would mark the beginning of his definitive drift away from conventional and institutional politics, as well as his renunciation of the purely economic and material analysis of orthodox socialism. Thereafter, and until the end of his life, JP would endeavour to bring Marx and Gandhi together for the benefit of a project of opposition and popular power, which he would refer to as *lok niti*. In the coming years he would bring together socialism's project of social transformation and non-violent methods of constructive work in an effort to devise a form of politics beyond the structures of the state and its institutions. Thereafter, and especially during the phase of his involvement with the *Bhoodan* movement, JP's politics would become closer to those of Gandhi, as he engaged in a deep exploration of the possibilities of non-violence, personal sacrifice and voluntarism such as these had been preached by the Mahatma ever since the event of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

4.1.2 "Incentives for Goodness" or the twisted dreams humankind

*Gandhiji's removal from our midst in the manner that it took place is both a crisis of our culture and crisis of our State. The peer of Buddha in the spread of cultured living and of Asoka in the founding of the Chakravarti Raj has been assassinated. The assassin is not one person, not even a team of persons, but a big and wide conspiracy of a foul idea and of organizations that embody it.*²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ "Gandhi and Socialism", *Janata*, 30 January 1949.

²⁵⁹ "Government Must Formally Resign and Home Minister Replaced", Statement jointly made with Rammanohar Lohia and Kamaldevi Chattopadhyaya, appeared in *Pioneer*, 4 January 1948.

-Jayaprakash Narayan, February 1948

A fire burnt in the hearts of the people when they fought for freedom. That fire is dead now, and the cold ash of frustration and despondency is suffocating

-Jayaprakash Narayan, August 1949²⁶⁰

By the end of 1947, JP's project of revolution, and his support of the socialists' rejection of the parliamentary actions of the Congress, had been dismantled and rendered anachronistic. The emancipative prospects of the emphasis on direct mass action of the former had been tarnished beyond repair by the mayhem of partition, while the offer of an advanced transfer of power made by Mountbatten in early 1947 had proven the efficacy of the much decried parliamentary methods of the Congress. His biographers have stated that JP felt guilty for the violence of Partition, and responsible for having "been intellectually aggressive(,) (having) mentally condoned the use of violence to obtain freedom since his imprisonment in Deoli Camp (and having) urged crowds to action."²⁶¹

Following 1947-8, JP would experience a deep emotional, intellectual and personal crisis, which fed his disowning of materialism and his eventual turn towards Gandhian methods and *sarvodaya*. After the transfer of power from the colonial to the national state, he would drift away from his former comrades of the CSP—many of which by this moment formed part of the Socialist Party—as a result of his gradual and definitive rejection of institutional politics. In the first annual conference of the SP after independence, celebrated in Nasik during March 1948, JP clearly stated his perception of the uselessness of parliamentary opposition in the chore of establishing a socialist society. Once the colonial state had vanished, he argued, the task of transforming the society of India had to be undertaken through constructive work, and "by positive service rather than by exploiting the mistakes and faults of others."²⁶² In a comment made in that same meeting of socialists, he made clear his full assumption of the formerly tentative rejection of a materialist approach to socio-political analysis, and his concern

²⁶⁰ Message published in the Journal *Spark*, Patna, on 9 August 1949. JP Papers (NMML).

²⁶¹ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 202.

²⁶² Annual Report of the General Secretary, *Socialist Party, Sixth Annual Conference, Nasik, 19-21 March 1948*, pp. 84-103, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. V (1948-1950), 241.

regarding the irrelevance of the socialist programme in the current circumstances of India:

I (had) not made much of spiritual regeneration. The happenings of the past few months have made me reconsider the whole position. Humanity has been uprooted. There have been mass murders. Women have been raped. Children have been cut to pieces. Blood has flown freely. Corruption is rampant. Blackmarketing has not stopped (sic.). (...) And the greatest of the tragedies has been the murder of Gandhiji. (...) Economic approach cannot be the only approach. We have been preaching this all these years. I feel I that our approach has a limited appeal. (...) Why must you talk of materialism all the while? There are people in society who are orthodox in attitude. They readily accept moral values. We must have a correct psychological approach towards these people as they are not influenced by our phraseology of class struggle.²⁶³

His complete break from the philosophical approach of materialism became clear in an article titled “Incentives for Goodness”, published in 1952, in which JP would declare that it robbed “man of the means to become truly human,” and went on to state that “(i)n a material civilization man ha(d) no rational incentive to be good.” During the following years he would further develop his views on the alienation caused by modern industrial society, which he referred to as the result of the twisted dreams of human kind:

In (the) present society (...) (t)he individual asks (...) why should he be good. There is no God, no soul, no morality, no life hereafter, no cycle of birth and death. He is merely an organization of matter, fortuitously brought into being, and destined soon to dissolve into the infinite ocean of matter. He sees all round him evil, corruption, profiteering, lying deception, cruelty, power politics, violence. He asks naturally why he should be virtuous. Our social norms of today and the materialist philosophy which rules the affairs of men answer back: he need not. The cleverer he is, the more gifted, the more courageously he practices the new amorality; and in the coils of this amorality the dreams and aspirations of humankind become warped and twisted.²⁶⁴

In a way that echoed Gandhi’s argumentation in *Hind Swaraj*, JP identified this “present society” with the urban life of modern civilization, which had its antidote in the protection and safety of village life. The village, JP asserted, was the only “natural and sensible habitat of man and the primary unit of social

²⁶³ Reply to the debate on the General Secretary’s Report, Nasik, 21 March 1948, *ibid.*, 246.

²⁶⁴ “Incentives for Goodness”, *Janata*, 12 October 1952.

organisation”; as such, they represented the only hope and remedy for the “impersonal relationships” that governed life in the cities, which generated in man a great “thirst for ‘society’” that led him to conform to artificial and harmful forms of association.²⁶⁵ Despite representing the antidote to the alienation brought by western civilization, the village way of life, which was the only truly Indian life, was being slowly destroyed:

I was myself born in a village and still have my home there. Eighty per cent of the babies born in this country are born in the villages and eighty per cent of our people have their homes there. (...) Why are the villages so important? (...) Most young men, particularly if they have received some education, develop an attitude of contempt for the village. They do not find congenial social life there, means of recreation, or prospects of employment. And so they turn their backs to the villages and swarm into the towns to become uprooted, ill-adjusted individuals whose lives have no zest or savour nor any uplifting and guiding ideal and goal.²⁶⁶

This destruction of the village was accompanied, in JP’s view, by a parallel growth of what he had previously termed the forces of reaction in Indian society. Indeed, he saw the crisis generated by the death of Gandhi as the result of this growth and its effect in society. The killing of the Mahatma was the symbol of the rotten fruits of power politics, and the sinister outcome of the “designs of princes, *zamindars*, millionaires and reactionaries who, learning the lesson of divide and rule from the British, are now trying to use the same weapon against the infant state of free India.”²⁶⁷

During this convulsed period, JP would go beyond noting the closeness between Marx and Gandhi to claim the complete identity between socialism and Gandhism. Both doctrines were, in turn, opposed to what he described in terms of the “fascism” of the Congress and the new state. JP was unable to see any substantial difference between the government of the Congress, the members of which he described as mere “carpet-baggers”²⁶⁸, and the Raj. In his view “(t)hose

²⁶⁵ “Bastions of Democracy”, *Bombay Chronicle*, 3 April 1958.

²⁶⁶ “Builders of Tomorrow”, Delhi, 15 January 1958, broadcast over All India Radio on 15 January 1958, Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 278.

²⁶⁷ “No Quarter to Separatism in any Form”, speech given at Surat, 29 February 1948, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. IV (1946-1948), 218.

²⁶⁸ Letter To Jawaharlal Nehru, 10 December 1948, Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. V (1948-1950) (Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 112.

who worked as agents of a foreign power and assisted foreign imperialists in crushing India's freedom struggle (were) now running the administration", causing the corruption and ineptitude of the institutions of the new state to exceed even that of the British regime.²⁶⁹ The new Congress was detached from the needs of the masses of India, while its members focused solely on "personal power and aggrandizement, (...) sordid intrigue and in little else." As a result of this, the revolutionary legacy of the *swadeshi* movement had been betrayed by the party, which had become little more than a "citadel of reaction", and represented the biggest danger for true social democracy and justice in India.²⁷⁰

This critical stance would go hand in hand with an open and harsh disavowal of Nehru, who had until the last years before independence been seen as the natural leader of the Congress Left. Since the transfer of power, JP had gradually drifted away from Nehru and, like Bose before him, had accused Jawaharlal of attempting to "ride two horses"²⁷¹: "You want to go towards Socialism, but you want the Capitalists to help in that. You want to build Socialism with the help of Capitalism. You are bound to fail in that." Further, JP would state that "(d)emocracy, socialism (were) mere words that the Congress bandies about with no faith in either and with the open cynicism of all those who would rape the masses."²⁷² Following the assassination of Gandhi, JP issued a statement asking for the removal of Nehru's government on the grounds of its incapacity to protect the Mahatma, and directed attacks at the Minister of Home Affairs Vallabhbhai Patel for taking a lax approach to the issue of Gandhi's safety and encouraging the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha.²⁷³ The rift between JP and the bearers of the new national government, and his disenchantment with the national state grew increasingly. In the summer of 1951, he led a general

²⁶⁹ *Free Press Bulletin*, Bombay, June 23, 1948, cited in Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 212.

²⁷⁰ 'Social Democracy in Free India', *Tribune*, 28 August 1950, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 30.

²⁷¹ This same expression was used by Subhas Chandra Bose to criticise Nehru's ambiguous political stance in a letter sent on 28 March, 1939. See Bose, Bose, and Bose, *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, 238.

²⁷² Letter To Jawaharlal Nehru, 10 December 1948, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. V (1948-1950), 112-13.

²⁷³ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 215.

strike of postmen and railway workers against what he termed “Nehru’s naked, open fascism.”²⁷⁴ JP and other union leaders were threatened with imprisonment by President Rajendra Prasad, a close acquaintance of JP and a relative of his wife, Prabhavati. However, this wasn’t necessary, since JP soon capitulated due to, in the words of his biographers, a fear of debilitating India’s position on the eve of what was seen as an imminent war with Pakistan.²⁷⁵

During the campaign that preceded the 1951 elections, JP asked not to be presented as a candidate for the Socialist Party and advocated for extra-parliamentary methods of socialist politics. In this first round of general elections the socialists would suffer a demoralizing blow, obtaining only 12 seats in Lok Sabha, less than the 27 of the communists and a mere trifle in comparison to the 326 seats won by the Congress.²⁷⁶ These results heralded the rise of Nehru to a position of undisputed power across the country and, following Patel’s death in 1950, also inside the Congress. JP avowedly, “went away and wept privately”²⁷⁷ after learning of the defeat, which brought with it an internal rift in the Socialist Party. The bankruptcy of the Socialist Party would add to his personal estrangement from the bearers and structures of the national state, contributing to his eventual and definitive break from *raj niti*, or the universe of power politics.

From that moment onwards, JP’s rejection of the state as the site of political transformation would become clear. This meant a dramatic break from his initial approach to socialism. During a fast undertaken in June 1952 he clearly stated that the path of institutional change and the traditional goals of socialists focused on conquering the state and power were insufficient and had to be complemented by the promotion of the transformation of individual men as the only way to strive for the establishment of the ideals of socialism. The establishment of such ideals were described as a task of curing society through the transformation of its individuals:

²⁷⁴ *Pioneer*, Lucknow, July 14 1951, in *ibid.*, 254.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 250.

²⁷⁶ "Statistical Report on General Elections, 1951, to First Lok Sabha," (New Delhi: Election Commission of India 1951).

²⁷⁷ *J.P. His Biography*, 259.

Traditionally, socialism has relied on institutional changes for curing the evils of modern society. We have in our movement, however, realized that institutional changes are not enough and that the individual man, the root of society, must also be cured. (...) If we have to serve socialism and create a new society and a new man (which is more important) we must make ourselves worthy instruments. Then only shall we succeed. Success does not mean, as in Stalinist Communism, only conquest and maintenance of power. Success means the realization and establishment in actuality of the noble ideals of socialism.”²⁷⁸

Up to this moment it is clear that socialism remained the ideal and the goal of his politics; however, JP had stopped thinking of socialism as a programme of government and transformation through the power of the state, and was now thinking of it in terms of the way to overcome the alienation imposed upon its individual members by modern industrial society. The extinction of this alienation would become possible only through the creation of a *dharmic* human community, the members of which had to identify themselves with “an ever-expanding area of human beings, till (they) identif(ied) (themselves) with the entire human community—the world community of human beings—and (...) become world citizens.”²⁷⁹

Following his fast of June 1952, JP would resign his role as a union leader as well as his membership to all political parties, claiming that, in order to pursue the path of revolution more effectively, it was necessary to distance himself from the workings of institutions and focus on activities of village development.²⁸⁰ Earlier during that same year, JP had already given signs of his sympathy towards the *Bhoodan* movement led by the Gandhian leader Vinoba Bhave, which advocated for the voluntary donation of land. He would devote the following decade of his life to this movement of land redistribution, which took over one of the main initiatives of reform defended by the Congress Socialist

²⁷⁸ ‘The Fast’, 20 July 1952, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 251.

²⁷⁹ “Three Basic Problems of Free India”, Lectures delivered between 21-23 August 1964, over the award of the Prize Fund given by the Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Prize Fund, in Bimal Prasad, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VIII (1960-1966) (Delhi: Manohar, 2007), 451.

²⁸⁰ Replies to Questions Posed at the Praja Socialist II Party’s Monthly Camp, Bombay, 16 November 1952, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 289.

Party during the late 1930s and 1940s. In the next section, I will argue that his growing engagement with Gandhi's thought must not be taken as a sign of his turn towards Gandhism, a move that would imply the rejection of the main goals and methods of socialism, which JP had defended since the early 1930s. In fact, JP's political convictions at this time remained deeply confronted to those of Gandhi, especially, like we argued above, regarding the latter's religious outlook and his pessimism regarding the activity of politics. Despite sharing with Gandhi a common concern for the causes and effects of alienation, JP would not simply abandon his former convictions for a full embrace of the Mahatma's programme and creed. Rather, JP would appeal to the revolutionary nature of Gandhi's thought and practice; in this sense, JP was going back to the image of Gandhi as the radical leader of the Non-Cooperation, discarding the leftist criticism accumulated against the Mahatma since the early 1930s. At the same time, JP's political activity would remain focused precisely on the kind of instrumental politics Gandhi had been profoundly opposed to and in which control over the present was lost in benefit of the possibility of a future happening.

In sum, I suggest that it is inaccurate to describe JP's programme during the 1950s as Gandhian; rather, I posit that during the years following the independence of India, he was striving to tailor an original brand of politics capable of going beyond the limits of economic materialism. This politics were fuelled by the anti-statist radicalism of early XX century radical nationalism, conceived through the teleological logic of socialism, and applicable by means of Gandhian practice. This, as will be developed further in the next section, was the beginning of *lok niti*.

4.2 The Birth of Lok Niti

4.2.1 Jayaprakash and Vinoba's Bhoodan

(W)hen Gandhiji acted and called the people to action, we had no alternative but to follow him. We

*were driven like dry leaves in the storm. (...) I believe a storm is brewing again, and once again we are going to be blown about like shrivelled leaves.*²⁸¹

Jayaprakash Narayan, 1953

*Man, today, is heading for self-destruction. The world trembles on the edge of a precipice. If it has to be saved, it is possible only if it is remade the Bhoodan or Sarvodaya way. There is need for international Bhoodan in the widest sense of the term.*²⁸²

Jayaprakash Narayan, 1954

Between 11 and 14 March, 1948, just over a month after the assassination of Gandhi, a group of his followers gathered at the *ashram* he had founded in Sevagram—built on land donated by the industrialist Jamnalal Bajaj²⁸³—to discuss the prospects for the future of the Mahatma’s philosophy and social programme. The leader of those present at Sevagram, a group that included important political figures such as the President Rajendra Prasad, was Vinoba Bhave. Those present at the gathering agreed to the creation of a *sarvodaya samaj*—society for the good of all—devoted to the task of uplifting all members and sectors of the society of India, and to the attainment of true *swaraj* through constructive work.

Bhave had been among the first followers of Gandhi upon his return from Africa in 1915, and had since then remained devoted to the creed of non-violence and the programme of village constructive work. He had been an active participant in all of Gandhi’s campaigns of civil disobedience, and an observant of the latter’s ideal model of village life. Bhave had achieved national fame when he was elected by Gandhi as the first individual *satyagrahi* at the beginning of the 1940 Quit India Movement. As the self-assumed heir to Gandhi’s project of village reconstruction and leader of the *Sarvodaya Samaj*, Vinoba would inaugurate the *Bhoodan* movement during a visit to Telangana in 1951, as a response to what he perceived as the unnecessary violence of the Communist groups that were surfacing in that region.

²⁸¹ Intervention in the debate on the General Secretary’s Report, Betul, 16 June 1953, Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 343.

²⁸² “Jeevandan”, *Janata*, 27 June 1954.

²⁸³ B. R. Nanda, *In Gandhi’s Footsteps: The Life and Times of Jamnalal Bajaj* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 211.

Vinoba's *Bhoodan* looked to promote the voluntary transfer of land from rich landowners to landless peasants. Based on the Gandhian principles of trusteeship and non-violence, the aim of the movement was to effect a transformation of society through an encouragement of generosity that would lead to a situation in which each had according to his needs, and all were equally united in a common project of redistribution. This final stage of establishment of social justice was referred to as *Gramdan*. During the next few years, Vinoba would use *Bhoodan* to spread a project of *gram-swaraj*, or village self-rule, that implied an economic transformation of India—to be effected through the “return to economic autonomy and self-maintenance, embodied in the work of the *charkha* and *khadi*”—as well as a moral regeneration of its society—that involved liberating the “people from possessiveness of land (and) the infatuation with money” and the rejection of “harmful habits like drinking, smoking, and buying foreign goods”.²⁸⁴

The exhortation of *Bhoodan*—or land gift—had a spectacular success in its initial years. During this time Vinoba walked across nearly 800 miles of Indian territory, and collected 17,000 acres of land on his way.²⁸⁵ The movement became an important symbol of the potency of Gandhian non-violence, and was able to capture the imagination of both nationalist idealists—like JP—who had been disenchanted with the coming of self-rule, and village dwellers who saw in Vinoba a saintly figure and heir to the Mahatma.

Vinoba's initial involvement with the *Sarvodaya Samaj*, and his dedication to *Bhoodan*, was motivated by what he saw as the limitations of power-politics, and of the established political groups acting in Independent India, especially the Congress. Thus, he declared that:

The Congress cannot serve the people because the principle of service has become a joke for the Congress. They are involved in power-politics. The socialists are a better lot, but they are after power. The Communists are thinking only in terms of violence. In

²⁸⁴ Ram, *Vinoba and His Mission. Being an Account of the Growth and Development of the Bhoodan Yagna Movement.*, 150-1.

²⁸⁵ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 280.

these circumstances, the *Sarvodaya Samaj* alone can deliver the goods.²⁸⁶

Sarvodaya work was further justified in view of the perceived destruction of the Indian village as a result of the endurance of inequitable distribution of land, and a feudal economic dynamic. In his speeches, Vinoba recurred to the influential XIX century nationalist argument of the Drain of Wealth theory, positing that the transfer of power had not meant the end of the drain of wealth from the villages, with the sole difference that now it was the corrupt and inefficient national state and not the colonial regime that was extracting the benefits. This, along with the instauration of parliamentary democracy and the party system, had delivered a “mortal blow” to the village life, and had left these transformed into “dens of envy, bitterness, distrust, squalor and disease.”²⁸⁷ The answer given by defenders of *Sarvodaya* was based on the complete surrender and sacrifice of oneself for the upliftment of others. In this sense, *Bhoodan* was part of a broader constructive programme based on personal renunciation, through which Vinoba’s voluntarism sought to complement, and highlight, the shortcomings of the national state in India, and promote a return to a truly Indian way of life.

As early as 1951, it is possible to find in JP’s speeches and writings traces of a similar anxiety regarding the incapacity of the state to provide for the people of India, as well as repeated references to the village as the site of hope for the future of the country. In a speech delivered in Bihar, on March of that year, he stated:

It seems that the Government has been hit by paralysis; the whole administration has become slack. But I have not been hit by paralysis. The village is ours. Pandit Nehru will not come to our villages for building roads and doing sanitation work. If the road is built in the villages, doctor’s cars can easily come to them and the danger of death from diseases would become remote. Trees should be planted on both sides of the road so that wood for construction and fruits for eating could be made available. (...) The capitalists have control over newspapers. Our voice is not able to spread. They do not attach importance to this work. (...) Since the government belongs to the Congress, at the instance of Congressmen the people

²⁸⁶ Cited in Ram, *Vinoba and His Mission. Being an Account of the Growth and Development of the Bhoodan Yagna Movement.*, 43.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 336-7.

do not hesitate to indulge in unlawful acts out of fear or greed (...). This situation is an indication of the country's misfortune. It is not surprising that under such circumstances your mind is depressed, and your heart broken. (...) Do not forget that if you sit down feeling helpless and unconcerned, then you will go down day by day. In order to remain alive and live like human beings you have to undertake the distribution of land. If the Congress Government does not do it, you have to change it.²⁸⁸

In this passage the village, that place which Pandit Nehru could not reach, appears as the site for true change, and the people, those who are not part of the government, as the only possible agents for transformation. Likewise, later in that same speech, JP would give evident signs of the beginning of his adoption of a Gandhian model popular empowerment and his view that voluntarism and self-sacrifice marked the way for the elimination of alienation. Vinoba's movement appeared before JP as the possibility for a "third alternative" beyond the failed methods of "violence and (...) parliamentary action". However, and despite making clear his affinity for the ideal of *Sarvodaya*—"Sarvodaya and Socialism are two words with one meaning."—up until that moment, JP was still speaking and thinking from a position defined by a socialist conception of social change and a Marxian teleology.

JP was drawn to Vinoba's calling following his period of fasting during the summer of 1952. Having completed it, he would describe the experience as a "kind of rebirth"²⁸⁹, after which it became impossible for him to remain faithful to a materialist approach to society, or to the practice of power politics. At the time, he found in *Bhoodan* a promising path towards a real transformation of man and society and for the establishing "in actuality (of) the noble ideals of socialism."²⁹⁰ Further, the revolutionary potential of *Bhoodan*, reminded JP of the thrust of the Non-Cooperation Movement, which had marked the origin for his own devotion to a politics of opposition and revolution. In March 1953, he would address a gathering of young students in the following terms:

²⁸⁸ Speech at Nava Nirmana Sammelan, Dekuli (Bihar), 12 March 1951, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 112-116.

²⁸⁹ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 273.

²⁹⁰ 'The Fast', 20 July 1952, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 251.

We are living in stirring times comparable to 1921. Revolution is afoot. Let us play our due parts in it. Let us prepare ourselves for it. I want you all to give up your studies; go and wander about in the villages and make what contributions you can to the *Bhoodan* Movement and try to make this revolution a success.²⁹¹

Bhoodan, he declared, held the seed for an authentic transformation of man and society and, in as much as it was based on a non-violent appeal for an intimate change of the individual that would lead to a transformation of the collective, had the potential to effect a revolution of greater scale than any other before it. Further, the movement showed the way for the overcoming of power politics and the creation of a “new outlook” of social action based on the sacrifice and potency of the common man and the brotherhood of all.²⁹² As the year 1953 progressed, we find that JP grew increasingly convinced of the virtues of *Bhoodan*, and increasingly vocal in its defence. In August he declared that the movement held the key to the “creation of a new civilization (...) in which there (would be) no exploitation.”²⁹³ And, a few months later, he described *Bhoodan* as “the first step towards a total revolution” that would create a “society (that) would strive for the good of all and in which everybody would be happy.” In this society, the state and its parties would be rendered useless and “(p)ower and authority would vest with the people in the true sense, and they would regulate and administer their own affairs”. By reducing and extinguishing “central authority” and vesting “the village (with) all the authority and jurisdiction” the total revolution initiated by *Bhoodan* would lead to a state of “perfect democracy based upon individual freedom and (in which) the individual will be the architect of his own government.”²⁹⁴

During 1953 it would become clear to JP that a true revolution of the economic, social and moral universe of man could never be accomplished through the state or by remaining fixated with a materialist outlook on social reality. The total revolution that *Bhoodan* announced was, in essence, the result

²⁹¹ Address to Students at the Youth Conference, Chandil (Bihar), 8 March 1953, *ibid.*, 325

²⁹² Address at a Public Meeting regarding *Bhoodan*, Secunderabad, 17 May 1953, *ibid.*, 338-40.

²⁹³ “The Dynamics of the Bhoodan Movement”, Madras, 15 August 1953, *ibid.*, 367.

²⁹⁴ Speech at the *Bhoodan* Workers Training Camp, Mokamah (Patna), 14 November 1953, *ibid.*, 382.

of the overcoming of alienation that, as I have argued, had been at the core of JP's efforts to reconcile the doctrine of Marx with the revolutionary practice of Gandhi. In this sense, it could be argued that the attraction JP felt for Vinoba's movement stemmed from its potential for successfully uniting the apparently opposed approaches of his two *gurus*. To the question of how a stateless, unalienated and democratic society could be rendered possible, he answered by bringing together the projects of both the Mahatma and the German author of *Capital*:

This can be done through an economic reconstruction which will ensure the fruit of labour to the workers, which is possible only when there is decentralization in the economic field, when the system of production is organized on the basis of village industries and the large-scale industries that will have to be essentially retained, will be socially owned and managed by workers. (...) Today our society abounds with persons who are mad after their own interest. In *Sarvodaya*, however, one has to be solicitous of others' interest. Man's nature will have to be changed. Values of life will have to be re-valued.²⁹⁵

The momentum of *Bhoodan* did not only revive JP's youthful commitment to revolution and contributed to his "rebirth" of 1952; further, it marked the moment after which his politics would decisively change and become focused on the idea of *lok niti*. The first evidence we find of his use of the formula would appear in the summer of 1953, shortly after his decision to join Vinoba in his walks across India. In a statement given in June of that year, in which JP declared that he would offer his own life as a gift to the cause of *Sarvodaya*, he would also express the urgent need to focus on the potential of *lok niti* as a way of finding a cure for the evils engendered by the practice of *raj niti*.²⁹⁶ With this distinction, JP was drawing upon Vinoba's former invocation of a *loka shakti*—or civil power—which had been central to the latter's programme of non-statist political transformation since the early 1950s. Vinoba was adamant about in his conviction regarding the limitations and shortcomings of the state and its institutions, regarding which he had declared:

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ "Jeevandan", *Janata*, 27 June 1954.

The Government cannot do much in this task. The Government is after all only a bucket, while the people are like a well. If there is no water in the well, how can there be any in the bucket? We will, therefore, go to the source of the water—the people. What the Government cannot do, the people can.²⁹⁷

A central tenet of Vinoba's political programme concerned the building of a *loka shakti* capable of standing opposed to the *danda shakti*—or power of coercion—of the state, and of contributing to the transformation of society through the autonomy and non-violence of the people. In his view, state action was inevitably linked to violence and coercion and had, thus, to be overcome and limited to its minimal expression:

Ever since the achievement of freedom the strength of the country seems to be clogged. The main reason is that all eyes are turned towards Delhi. But the strength lies with the people in the villages. (...) The heat of the villages can make Delhi warm. (...) Delhi has a value which is only secondary. (...) (T)he state power can be effective only if it is based on the people's initiative or *Loka-Shakti*.²⁹⁸

After 1954, JP would cling to Vinoba's formulation of civil power and would fashion his own approach to politics after it. This necessarily entailed a drastic adaptation of his previous socialist convictions and methods. His adoption of the ideal of *lok niti* would also entail a transformation of his personal demeanour that startled contemporary observers and many of his acquaintances. A British journalist working in India at the time would describe his metamorphosis as follows: "He (JP) walks slowly, moves his hand in deliberate, hieratic gestures, talks as quietly as Vinoba himself and has ironed all trace of passion from his fine, strong face which is dominated now (...) by the grave, grey eyes."²⁹⁹ Little remained of his former image as fiery orator and an instigator to direct revolutionary action. His old socialist comrades, like Lohia and Madhu Limaye, who harshly criticised Vinoba as a utopian thinker out of touch with reality and the defender of a potentially dictatorial project, were confused by the *jeevandan*—or gift of life—of the new JP, and gradually drifted away from him.

²⁹⁷ Cited in Ram, *Vinoba and His Mission. Being an Account of the Growth and Development of the Bhoodan Yagna Movement.*, 408.

²⁹⁸ Cited in *ibid.*, 408-9.

²⁹⁹ Hallam Tennyson, *Saint on the March. The Story of Vinoba.* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955), 135.

During the following years, JP's distance from his former socialist comrades would become unbridgeable. These, in turn, would become entangled in internal struggles reflected in the periodic disbanding and creation of new socialist parties and groups during the second half of the 1950s. The process of dissolution of socialist unity would be intensified following Nehru's famous speech at the 1955 Avadi session of the Congress, in which he declared that the Indian state would thereafter strive for the construction of a socialistic pattern of society. The adoption of the banner of socialism by the national state made socialists in opposition seem anachronistic and intensified the intestine scrambles of the erstwhile Congress socialists. JP, who for decades had been the leader and unifier of the former Left Wing of the nationalist movement, was bitterly blamed, especially by Lohia, as responsible for this process of disintegration. In this sense, JP's move towards Vinoba's *Bhoodan* and his growing concern with *lok niti* following 1954 can be seen as an attempt to run away from "possessive friendships"³⁰⁰ of the past and as the result of the attrition caused by the exhausting cycle of institutional opposition.

In 1956, after two years of walking with Vinoba, JP founded an *ashram* in the village of Sokhodeora, in Bihar, with the intention of focusing on the formation of volunteers for the cause of *Bhoodan*. This event inaugurated a period of intense personal loneliness and isolation, in which he would devote himself to the spread of the ideal of *Sarvodaya* and the task of theorizing the possibilities of *lok niti*.

4.2.2 Jayaprakash and Nehru: *Lok* and *Raj Niti* in the 1950s

You apparently hold that the only guarantee of internal security and national unity is Congress rule. I do not accept this at all. India has not fallen apart, not because of any individual or any government, but because, by and large, the people of this country do wish to live together as a nation.

-Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 14 July 1957.³⁰¹

*Education is politics, health is politics and trade and commerce are politics. The very food we eat is politics.*³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 265.

³⁰¹ In Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 185.

³⁰² Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 1 March 1957, in *ibid.*, 172.

-Jayaprakash Narayan, 1957.

In spite of declaring his intention to remain aloof from institutional and party politics following the creation of his *ashram* at Sokhodeora village, JP remained an active commentator of national and international affairs during the last half of the 1950s and throughout the 1960s. During these years he emerged as one of Nehru's foremost critics. From his position of partial seclusion in rural Bihar, he denounced what he perceived to be a cult of personality fermenting around the persona of Nehru, not missing a single opportunity to raise his voice against the policies of the national state and its Prime Minister. In response, Nehru attacked JP for jumping "continually from *Bhoodan* to the political field to attack the Congress", and deplored the latter's lack of a "full sense of responsibility."³⁰³ A couple of months after this declaration, Nehru would write a hostile letter accusing JP of being out of touch with reality and embittered by his own, Nehru's, success in life.³⁰⁴ To this, JP responded with a long letter in which he referred to Nehru as "Dear Sir"—whereas all his previous letters to Jawaharlal had started with "Dear Bhai"—and attacked the pretence of the Congress to pose itself as the only viable political option for independent India. In this letter, JP accused Nehru of being out of touch with the reality of the country he was ruling and of having been "swallowed by the official world."³⁰⁵ Following the 1957 general elections, in which the Congress emerged as the clear winner at the national level, Nehru would try to patch things up with JP with a letter in which he reclaimed their old friendship and invited him to join hands with the Congress for the task of promoting democracy in India.³⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the damage was done. The prior political disagreement between JP and Nehru had turned into a personal estrangement that would prove impossible to dissolve before the death of latter 7 years later, in 1964.

³⁰³ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Hindustan Times*, Feb 21 1957.

³⁰⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to Jayaprakash Narayan, 3 April 1957, Brahmanand papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

³⁰⁵ Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 14 July 1957, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 181-6.

³⁰⁶ Nehru's response to Jayaprakash Narayan, 18 July 1957, *ibid.*, 584-5.

The growth of the gap that separated JP from Nehru during the last part of the 1950s can be seen as a sign of the rooting of the distinctive and antagonistic political cultures of *lok* and *raj niti* during the first decades of independence in India. As we argued in the second chapter, JP must be seen as one of the most important continuators of the conception of the politics of protest developed during the first two decades of the XX century, an ensemble of practices that stemmed from the rejection of the workings and symbols of the colonial state as well as the quotidian associated with it. The political culture of *lok niti*, which JP defended and openly promoted after 1954, was based on an anti-statist conception of autonomy and *swaraj*—or self-rule—and an approach to democracy shaped by a belief in direct political action and the voluntarism of the individual and the masses. In contrast, the foundation of the Indian state represented a decisive break from the ideals of *swadeshi* and, seen from the optic of *lok niti*, as the continuation of the reprehensible tradition of authoritarian politics of the colonial regime. Having drifted closer to the ideals and methods of Gandhi, JP had, by the mid 1950s, renounced his previous allegiance to the socialist project of promoting the transformation of society through the state. Instead, he had adopted a stance defined in opposition to the state and in defence of direct action. On the other hand, during the 1950s Nehru came to embody the symbol of the sovereignty and legitimacy of the new postcolonial state.

The clash between these two political cultures, and between JP and Nehru as their most important representatives became clear shortly after the transfer of power. In the last days of 1948 Nehru, now acting as the Primer Minister of independent India, wrote an anguished letter to JP, at that moment the head of the All-India Railway Federation, in which he discussed the harmful consequences a general railway strike could bring upon India at such a critical moment. This was a plan that had been announced by the general secretary of the CPI, B. T. Ranadive, and which aimed at creating the stage for a massive

insurrection.³⁰⁷ In light of the “delicate situation” in Kashmir, the “critical” international situation and the absence of a “balanced way of looking at things” among the “people and the newspapers”, Nehru bemoaned the “disastrous consequences” of adopting a policy that could only lead to “weakening and chaos” in India.³⁰⁸ In an attempt to convince JP of rejecting the strike initiative of the communists, Nehru called upon him to remember the recent history of Germany, where Fascism grew in the space created by the promotion of such disruptive initiatives.³⁰⁹ It is clear that by this moment, Nehru’s top priority was the maintenance of order in a country that had been recently disrupted by the chaos of partition; in this sense, Nehru had already began to act and think not as a leader of popular opposition, as he had for decades, but as a symbol of institutional power. On the other hand, JP was at this moment still convinced of the need to promote a politics of protest as the best way of struggling for the goals of socialism and social transformation. In his view, the threat of fascism would not emerge from popular mobilization or movements of protests, but rather from the growing corruption and nepotism inside the Congress. Indeed, earlier in December 1948, shortly after the police had prevented him from delivering a speech before a meeting of railway workers in Nagpur, JP had written to Nehru to complain bitterly about the fascism of the Congress, and the dangers of the growing power that “the tiny gods at Delhi” were amassing in detriment of the freedom of the common man.³¹⁰

A second moment of important conflict between JP and Nehru took place in August 1955, following a clash between students of B. N. College and State Transport employees in Patna, which resulted in police firing against a crowd. In response to the occurrence, that took place on August 12, just a few days before the Independence Day celebrations, Nehru addressed the students in the

³⁰⁷ Gene Donald Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), 277-9.

³⁰⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru, letter to Jayaprakash Narayan, December 22, 1948, in Mastram Kapoor, ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, vol. 7 (Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011), 215.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 216.

³¹⁰ Jayaprakash Narayan, letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 10 December 1948, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. V (1948-1950), 111-14.

following way: "To take part in demonstrations and hooliganism in the name of politics is, apart from the right or wrong of it, not proper for the students of any country."³¹¹ Ever since his inaugural participation as a student in the ranks of Non-Cooperation, Jayaprakash had conferred great importance on the political involvement of students, which he saw as intrinsically selfless and thus more adequate for the practice of protest in the face of abusive power. It is clear that, during the 1950s, Nehru saw student unrest as a sign of harmful indiscipline and a danger to the stability to the new state. In his view, student protest appeared as an unseemly political practice, "immature", "absurd", less fruitful than institutional politics and conducive to the weakening of the nation.³¹²

JP described Nehru's speech before the students of Patna in 1955 as a "command performance", and harshly criticised the Prime Minister, hinting that Nehru was recurring to the "accents of totalitarianism" in his dismissal of the grave abuse of power by the police, and his marked lack of interest in siding with the students, which, in his view, represented "the people".³¹³

Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued that it is possible to read Nehru's speech before the students of Patna as addressing the important question regarding what should be the appropriate and acceptable political behaviour for the citizens of the independent Indian nation. Further, Chakrabarty suggests that politics for Nehru, who had declared earlier in 1955 to be "fed up" with them³¹⁴, had become merely "a question of negotiating the day-to-day problem of development" in India.³¹⁵ In this sense, Nehru had become the Indian symbol of the aspiration—common across most of the erstwhile called Third World after the 1950s—of a

³¹¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, "Students and Discipline", in Sarvepalli Gopal, ed. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 29 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984), 83. Cited in Dipesh Chakrabarty, "'In the Name of Politics': Sovereignty, Democracy, and the Multitude in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, no. 30 (2005): 3293.

³¹² In Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 22-23.

³¹³ Jayaprakash Narayan, Second Statement on Police Firings in Patna, 1 September 1955, *The Indian Nation*, Patna, 2 september, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 81-6.

³¹⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru, "Hard Work for Building a New India", speech at the plenary session of the third convention of all-India Bharat Sevar Samaj, Nagpur, march 12, 1955, in Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 19.

³¹⁵ Chakrabarty, "'In the Name of Politics': Sovereignty, Democracy, and the Multitude in India," 3294.

politics free of conflict, geared at the obtainment of development and modernization. Nothing could be further from the revolutionary impetus of *swadeshi*, and more distanced from JP's old revolutionary inclinations and new anti-statist convictions. In the words of Sudipta Kaviraj, the Nehruvian approach to the proper way of canalizing the reformist and transformational impetus of anticolonial nationalism following the transfer of power was shaped by an emphasis on *bureaucratization* and the enlargement of the capacities and powers of the state, while JP's approach to it remained *mobilizational*, and focused on the need to appeal to the potencies of the masses.³¹⁶

This distinction is at the heart of the separation between the political cultures of *raj* and *lok niti*. In the former, politics is seen as an activity of social administration directed towards the maintenance of order and the promotion of economic progress. In the latter, politics is seen as the very fabric of social life and as involving every individual and collective action, longing, concern, demand and struggle. In this sense, being away from *raj niti* did not involve, in JP's view, the need to stay at the margin of politics; to the contrary, it meant being free to devote oneself to the truly just and completely political cause of *lok niti*. This position is clearly described in a letter sent by JP to Nehru in March 1957, where, in response to the Primer Minister's criticism regarding his apparently fickle public stance, he states:

You have often expressed your annoyance at the fact that even though I claim to have given up politics I continue to dabble in it. I have often explained this too. When I say that I am not in politics I mean that I am not in competitive politics or party politics or power politics. But politics as such is all pervasive and no one in modern society can be out of politics even if he wished to be so (sic). In a way, Shri Aurobindo was not out of politics (...) nor is Vinoba out of politics. Indeed, Vinoba has often claimed that *Bhoodan* is intensive politics. Education is politics, health is politics and trade and commerce are politics. The very food we eat is politics.³¹⁷

As is implied by his reference to Aurobindo, JP's idea of the pervasiveness of politics was tied to his identification of the radical agitations of

³¹⁶ See Sudipta Kaviraj, "A Critique of the Passive Revolution," *ibid.* 23, no. 45/47 (1988): 60.

³¹⁷ Jayaprakash Narayan, letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 1 March 1957, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 171-2.

the early decades of the XX century as the point of origin of the only truly revolutionary and virtuous tradition of politics in contemporary India.

In this regard, it is instructive to return to the arguments of Dipesh Chakrabarty, who proposes that, in lieu of the extremely limited scope of the franchise imposed by the British colonial regime, there never existed an everyday domain of politics in which the people could directly participate in colonial India prior to the development of the *swadeshi* movement. In his view, the irruption of Gandhian nationalism after 1919 generated a “political domain for the ordinary Indian: students, middle class salary earners, the working classes and the peasants”, and constituted the “major part of the training in ‘politics’ that most Indians received before the country became independent.”³¹⁸ Such politics were opposed to the elite practice of the Congress *deshmukhs*—heirs to the politics of liberal nationalism developed during the second half of the nineteenth century—and were based on a defence of the need to oppose and defy unjust laws, abusive authorities, and unlawful sovereignty. JP was among those who were initially “trained” in such politics and, as I have argued, among the most vocal defenders of the cause of revolution in India following the Non-Cooperation movement. During his years as leader and ideologue of the Congress socialists, he would oppose legislatures and constitutional politics; he would advocate the boycott of the Congress ministries after 1936, and the formation of the Constituent Assembly, which he labelled, in true *swadeshi* fashion, as elite politics and, as such, foreign to the political thrust of opposition and resistance which he identified as the only valid form of nationalism. In this way, we can see how his defence of socialism remained coherent with his foundational devotion to early XX century protest in the face of *deshmukh* politics.

Consequently, it appears clearly that JP’s investment in *lok niti* was a way of responding to and taking forward the oppositional “training” in politics that the people of India had experienced before the coming of the national state, especially through the Mahatma’s anti-statist agitations. Throughout the 1950s

³¹⁸ Chakrabarty, “In the Name of Politics”: Sovereignty, Democracy, and the Multitude in India,” 3297.

and 60s, at the same time as he abandoned the practice of institutional politics, JP would drift away from Nehru and would begin to identify him with the increasingly elitist and arbitrary tendencies growing inside the Congress-dominated national state. Such tendencies were, in his view, “seeking to reduce the people to the position of sheep” and thus represented a betrayal of “the *swaraj* for which (he) had fought and for which the people of (India) had fought.”³¹⁹ Despite the gradual growth in the legitimacy of the institutions of the state, and the stature of Nehru as a national leader and international figure during these years, JP would carry on his project of promotion of *lok niti*, constituting himself as the most important exponent of the politics of protest in India before the declaration of the Emergency in 1975.

4.2.3 The “revolution beautiful”: Socialism, Sarvodaya and self-help

*We may not live to see that consummation ourselves, but I feel confident that if the world were ever to reach the port of peace and freedom and brotherhood, socialism must eventually merge into sarvodaya.*³²⁰

-Jayaprakash Narayan, 1957

In a previous section I argued that, despite his gradual distancing from party and institutional politics and his adoption of a anti-statist programme based on voluntarism and self-sacrifice, JP’s political involvement up to the second half of the 1950s was still shaped by the coordinates of socialism. Likewise, during this time he began denouncing the equation between socialism and economic development through the state as a way “of sacrificing the values of socialism”, and as a step previous to “regimentation and dictatorship.”³²¹

Ever since the disappointing results of the 1951 general elections the unity of the former Congress socialists seemed to be heading towards a definitive rout. In the midst of a marked process of disbandment, which will be dealt with at length in the following chapter, JP’s adoption of *lok niti* could not but further weaken the ranks of the socialists. His gradual abandonment of party politics

³¹⁹ *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, 25 October 1957, in Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 245.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

³²¹ “New Dynamics of Social Change”, Bombay, 8 November 1956, *ibid.*, 149.

would come to a conclusion in late 1957, with his definitive resignation as a member of the PSP. The announcement was made through a letter published in October 25 in which he explained to his old comrades and friends—along whom he had “worked, (...) suffered imprisonment, lived through the adventures of the underground, and tasted the ashes of independence”—the reasons for the need to turn “from socialism to *sarvodaya*.” The letter, heavily loaded with emotion, is one of JP’s most personal texts, and the closest he ever came to writing an autobiography. It began by stating his deeply felt need to “part company and walk (...) alone”, along with his acknowledgement of the impossibility of persuading his old friends to follow him on his new path: “We may not live to see that consummation ourselves, but I feel confident that if the world were ever to reach the port of peace and freedom and brotherhood, socialism must eventually merge into *Sarvodaya*.”³²² Throughout the long letter, JP makes constant affectionate references to his socialist friends, and describes with nostalgia the “uncompromising and undaunted” struggle for freedom engaged in by the members of the old Congress Socialist Party. As a way of saying good bye to his old brothers in arms, he declared: “Thus far I travelled together with my colleagues in happy comradeship, the memory of which will sweeten the remaining part of my life.”³²³

JP devoted the opening section of the letter to the task of discerning the “uniform line of development” that guided the apparent “zigzag and tortuous chart of unsteadiness and blind groping” that had been his intellectual and political life. As has been shown, he situated the beginning of this trail in Gandhi’s “first non-cooperation movement (which in 1919) swept over the land as a strangely uplifting hurricane.” Ever since that moment of youthful euphoria, JP tells his readers, he had adopted freedom as one “beacons” of his life:

Freedom, with the passing of the years, transcended the mere freedom of my country and embraced freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel—above all, it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit. This freedom has become a passion of life and I shall not see it

³²² *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, Oct. 25 1957, *ibid.*, 227.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 239.

compromised for bread, for power, for security, for prosperity, for the glory of the state or for anything else.

The freedom heralded by Gandhi was later complemented by a second “beacon of light”, namely, the ideal of “equality and brotherhood” promoted by Marxism. Political freedom, JP declared, could not be enough, but had to be accompanied by “freedom from exploitation, from hunger (and) from poverty.”³²⁴

JP then elaborated on his distaste for the techniques of the CPI, and of the gradual evolution of his rejection of Indian communists’ identification of Gandhi as a reactionary force during the 1930s. Further, he described his disillusionment with the Soviet model of socialism following the Second World War, when it became clear that nationalisation and collectivisation could not show the way to true socialism, but, in fact, constituted its negation. JP went as far as to state that the West, with its fixation on materialism, had been unable to produce a true example of socialism, and had been satisfied with the promotion of the violent doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the corrosive growth of bureaucratization.³²⁵

He reiterated his rejection of the supposed Western fixation with materialism, which he identified as the original source of human alienation. Materialism, in his view, “denied the identification with others” and lead inevitably “to an ever-growing appetite”:

I believe that unless members of society learn to keep their wants under control, willing sharing of things may be difficult, if not impossible, and society would be bound to split into two divisions: (1) comprising of those who are trying to discipline others and (2) comprising of all the rest. The only solution seems to be to restrict as much as possible the need and area of disciplining from above by ensuring that every member of society practises self-discipline and the values of socialism, and among other things, willingly shares and cooperates with his fellowmen.³²⁶

The limitation of wants emerged as JP’s central proposition for the development of a true socialist revolution. *Sarvodaya* meant, for him, the adoption of a Gandhian horizon of moral principles and revolutionary

³²⁴ Ibid., 228-9.

³²⁵ Ibid., 234-6.

³²⁶ Ibid., 242.

technologies in the pursuit of a truly socialist society. In order to fully appreciate the importance of Gandhi, it was necessary to consider his leadership beyond the narrow logic of *raj niti*. Seen mainly as a leader of people, and not of parties of institutions, Gandhi appeared as a “world leader of humanity”; observed through the lens of *lok niti*, the Mahatma appeared not as a “national leader fighting for the freedom of his country”, but as a “leader of humanity, working to free his fellow-men from bondage.” JP’s argument in defence of Gandhian *sarvodaya* is thus revealed as a strategy devised to overcome the unsatisfying stagnation of Western socialism. *Lok niti*, the political culture that had emerged from the coming together of the revolutionary thrust of Gandhian nationalism and the ideals of socialism, was seen by JP as a tool capable of universalizing the drive of India’s freedom struggle.³²⁷

However, Gandhi’s early death had prevented him from completing this task. By defending *lok niti* and stepping away from the horizon of institutional politics, JP declared to be contributing to the Mahatma’s project. Power politics, he concluded, could simply “not deliver the goods, (these) being the same old goals of equality, freedom, brotherhood (and) peace.”³²⁸ Socialism could not be created through law or force, but only through voluntary action; in this sense, he declared that “*Sarvodaya* (was) people’s socialism.”³²⁹

What was needed, then, was not a change in the political system but a complete transformation of human society. The goal should be to strive for the creation of a society where “brothers (could) live together as brothers.” This is where the importance of Vinoba’s project became clear, in as much as it was geared towards the constitution of a new and radically different community:

In the beautiful revolution of *Gramdan*, ownership was not abolished by force of any kind, but freely surrendered to the community. The outward social change was accompanied with inward human change. It was an example of what Gandhiji meant by a double revolution. In place of social tensions, conflicts and tyrannies, there were freedom and mutual goodwill and accord,

³²⁷ Ibid., 244.

³²⁸ Ibid., 245.

³²⁹ Ibid., 247.

making it possible for an unprecedented output of free collective initiative and endeavour.³³⁰

Vinoba, JP declared, had provided him with the key to adapt Gandhi's philosophy into a practice for the accomplishment of a true social revolution. It cannot be overlooked that, even if JP was thinking within the coordinates of socialism's ideal of social justice, his defence of *sarvodaya* was opening the door to a different project of emancipation: the one posed by the expansion of the acceptance of techniques of self-empowerment defended today in India by advocates of the ideal of the entrepreneurial citizen, the ensemble of new social movements, the NGO sector, and defendants of the neoliberal discourse against state intervention.

4.3 Affinities and Contrasts: JP, the RSS and the emergence of new spaces of anti-statist action

In this final section, I am interested in hinting at the ways in which JP's defence of *lok niti* contributed to the creation of a space for practices of protest that would shape and transform Indian politics in later years. More concretely, I want to explore the parallels and affinities between JP's position during these crucial years and the position and practice promoted by the RSS in previous decades and during these same years. As we will see below, both the project of Hindu nationalism promoted by the latter and the *lok niti* of the former can be seen as products of what I have referred to as the radical thrust of early XX century nationalism, and as sharing a common set of concerns regarding political practice and social transformation. These affinities, as will be discussed in chapter 6, would bring JP and the RSS together in the 1970s. At the same time, this section will also highlight the important ideological and conceptual differences between the projects of *lok niti* and Hindu nationalism, which would ultimately stand in the way of a more important coming together of JP and the RSS during the 1950s.

During the years following independence, the considerable widening of the reach and aspirations of the state grew in direct relation to the power of the figure of Nehru and the Congress Party. As a result, most of the opposition groups and

³³⁰ Ibid., 251.

parties during this time struggled not only to oppose the policies of the state and the Congress, but also to retain a measure of access to them as a way of securing political efficiency and power. Such a situation, described as the Congress system³³¹ or the Congress umbrella³³², resulted in a general lack of independent movements of organized opposition and protest. As a result, during the first decades after independence, political activism in India came to be “subsumed by or insistent on a full disassociation from the institutional power of the Nehruvian state.”³³³

It is clear from looking at JP’s stance during these years that he was very consciously refusing to let his activism be subsumed by the institutions of *raj niti*. As we have seen above, his move away from party politics was accompanied by an outright and virulent rejection of the methods and practices of the Congress as a party of state, and of the stance adopted by Nehru as Prime Minister. In his view, the Congress had “deviated from its true path”³³⁴, and had ceased to represent “the conscience of the people.” Instead, it had become “so identified with the government (...) that it ha(d) lost the power to protect the rights of the people.”³³⁵ He promoted the view that it was necessary to “accustom the people to the idea that to be opposed to the Congress (was) not to be opposed to the nation”³³⁶, but, rather, to be in favour of the authentic transformation of society. He consistently bemoaned the corruption of both the state and the Congress, and went so far as to accuse them of fascism.

In his view, the problems of India were caused by the fact that “the government belong(ed) to the Congress” and not to the people. The remedy for such a state of affairs, he claimed, laid in the promotion of anti-statist protest and non-statist constructive work: “if the Congress Government does not do it, you

³³¹ Rajni Kothari, “The Congress ‘System’ in India,” *Asian Survey* 4, no. 12 (Dec. 1964) (1964).

³³² Robert L. Hardgrave Jr. and Stanley Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation* (Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993), 197.

³³³ Ray and Katzenstein, “Introduction. In the Beginning There Was the Nehruvian State,” 12.

³³⁴ Annual Report of the General Secretary, Socialist Party, Sixth Annual Conference, Nasik, 19-21 March 1948, in *ibid.*, 234.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 236

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 238.

have to change it.”³³⁷ In the following paragraphs I will explore the way in which this stance mirrored, and differed from, that of the RSS, one of the most important forces that stood outside the dominant “Nehruvian social compact”³³⁸ during the early years of independent life in India.

From its moment of inception in 1925, the leaders and ideologues of the RSS, or Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, worked hard to promote an image the group as a cultural organization, alien to politics and concerned primarily with the transformation of society through the promotion of ideals of discipline, order and strength that were identified as the core values of Hindu society. In the words of one of its most prominent figures, the “ultimate vision” of the RSS was the attainment of “a perfectly organised state of our society wherein each individual has been moulded into a model of ideal Hindu manhood and made into a living limb of the corporate personality of society.”³³⁹ The importance of remaining outside politics was highlighted by the constant prohibition imposed upon its *pracharaks*, or full-time cadres, of forming part of any political party or organization.³⁴⁰ The rejection of politics promoted by the RSS is justified by the organization’s explicit goal of “character building” and of focusing on the “wholesale regeneration of the real, i.e. cultural life, of the Nation.”³⁴¹

The similarities between this position and the basic thrust of JP’s *lok niti*, such as this began to take shape during the early 1950s, are clear and revealing. In this sense, the consistent rejection of associating with political parties and institutions defended by the RSS since the 1920s can be seen as a direct antecedent of JP’s drift away from *raj niti* following the transfer of power. This common approach would be further linked by the way in which both JP and the RSS chastised Nehru during the early years of independence. The latter accused

³³⁷ Speech at Nava Nirmana Sammelan, Dekuli (Bihar), 12 March 1951, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 112-116.

³³⁸ This expression is taken from the arguments developed in Ray and Katzenstein, “Introduction. In the Beginning There Was the Nehruvian State,” 8.

³³⁹ M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore: Vikrama Prakashan, 1966), 61.

³⁴⁰ In fact, article four of the RSS constitution specifically prohibited the RSS from taking part in politics. Walter Andersen, “The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: Iii: Participation in Politics ” *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 13 (Mar. 25, 1972) (1972): 674.

³⁴¹ M. S. Golwalkar, in *The Organiser*, June 25, 1956, cited in Christophe Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism : A Reader* (Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 176.

the Prime Minister of promoting a harmful and deceitful version of secularism that was weakening the *Hindu Rashtra*, while the former saw Nehru as the most important symbol and defendant of the degrading culture of *raj niti*. At the same time, both JP and the RSS decried the way in which the adoption of foreign socio-political categories and practices were contributing to the creation of a more materialist and individualist outlook among Indians.

However, and despite these important affinities, there were fundamental differences between the outlook of the RSS and the position of JP during the 1950s. For M. S. Golwalkar, who had taken over the reins of the RSS in 1940 following the death of its founder K. B. Hedgewar, the RSS was the ideal model of “society”, or *sangh*, against which the existing society in India had to be measured. In other words, society in India had to be transformed following the organization of the RSS and should aim at a version of *varnashramadharma* order.³⁴² At the same time, the main concern of the RSS was the retrieval of the *harmony* of the traditional Hindu social order. On the other hand, we have seen that JP gave central importance to the overcoming of alienation and the attainment of true freedom and socialism through autonomy of the society and its members. Likewise, his focus during this time was on the village as the “natural and sensible habitat of man and the primary unit of social organisation.”³⁴³ Moreover, while the RSS rejected all foreign isms as a threat to the harmony of Hindu social order, JP was opposed to the construct of Western civilization, such as this had emerged from the matrix of early XX century nationalist critiques, and had been described in *Hind Swaraj*. Thus, while the programme of the RSS remained focused on a narrow cultural nationalism, tied to conceptions of territory and hierarchical social norms, JP’s *lok niti* was concerned with the promotion of social bonds that stemmed from a common civilizational background marked by the pre-eminence of moral action. In other words, both were focused on the creation of a *dharmic* community, but gave very different meanings to it.

³⁴² Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism. Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 140.

³⁴³ “Bastions of Democracy”, *Bombay Chronicle*, 3 April 1958.

These points of contrast notwithstanding, it is important to account for the similarities and affinities of both approaches during these years. For this purpose, it can be useful to go back to what I have termed the moment of origin of JP's political devotion and situate the beginning of the RSS in the context of the emergence and aftermath of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

In his pioneering study of the history of the RSS, Walter Andersen has showed that Gandhi's support and defence of the Khilafat movement was opposed by members of the Congress in Maharashtra and Bombay Province, who had rallied behind the figure of Tilak before his death in 1920 and who disagreed with both the motives and the means of the Non-Cooperation Movement.³⁴⁴ Among these Congressmen was B. K. Hedgewar, who during the 1920 session of the INC in Nagpur was appointed to the Non-Cooperation Council of the Central Provinces Provincial Congress and assigned the task of organizing its meetings.³⁴⁵ As a result of his participation in the campaigns of Non-Cooperation in Maharashtra, Hedgewar was sentenced to a year's imprisonment in mid-1921. After being released from custody in 1922, he was "dismayed" by what he saw as "the lack of organisation in the Congress volunteer organisations"³⁴⁶ in the region following the dismemberment of the Non-Cooperation agitations. During the following years he would continue his work as a member of the Congress, and develop close ties with Hindu chauvinist figures, most notably V. D. Savarkar, the author of the tract *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*. His instrumental role in the creation of the RSS in March 1925 was the result of his interaction with these groups and figures, his established career as a political activist, and his concern with the organization of volunteer bodies as a central part of nationalist politics.³⁴⁷

Shaped during the same years, and emerging as a result of similar processes and concerns, both the doctrine of the RSS and JP's political devotion can be said to have originated in the matrix of early XX century radical

³⁴⁴ Walter Andersen, "The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: I: Early Concerns " *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 11 (Mar. 11 1972) (1972): 589.

³⁴⁵ Narayan Hari Palkar, *Dr. Hedgewar* (Pune: Bharatiya Vichar Sadhana, 2007), 64-5.

³⁴⁶ Andersen, "The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: I: Early Concerns " 590.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 592.

nationalism, and to share a common emphasis on the importance of mobilization, anti-statist stances and the centrality of constructive work in society.

An important moment in the consolidation of the image and functioning of the RSS as an organization devoted to constructive work came in 1947 with the chaos and confusion generated by the events leading up to and following the Partition of British India. During the convulsed year of 1947, the RSS played an important role in helping Hindu and Sikh refugees cross the border from Pakistan and settle in different locations across north India. In Delhi, a large number of volunteers were organized as part of the Hindu Sahayata Samiti, a body devoted to dissemination of food and medicines for refugees. The organization's significant work among these sectors was to provide enormous goodwill in later years, and would prove crucial in its dissemination across north and western India, especially as a result of its positive impact on the voting patterns of the RSS's sister political organisation, the Jana Sangh.³⁴⁸

As a result of the relationship of Nathuram Godse with the RSS, the organization was banned following the assassination of Gandhi in early 1948. Being forced to continue its work outside the law strengthened its original anti-statist thrust and its conviction regarding the importance of non-political action. In this sense, the years following 1948 constituted the period of consolidation of the organization's tradition of constructive work, which during this time focused basically on the building of schools and educational institutions organized following the RSS's brand of cultural nationalism.³⁴⁹ During the 1950s and 60s, the RSS remained very active in the creation of new institutions devoted to constructive work which increased its influence and made it possible to cover many layers of the society of India, from teachers and student groups, to organized labour, *adivasi* communities and slum dwellers.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ "The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: li: Who Represents the Hindus?," *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 12 (Mar. 18 1972) (1972): 638.

³⁴⁹ Tanika Sarkar, "Problems of Social Power and the Discourses of the Hindu Right," in *Social Movements in India: Poverty, Power and Politics*, ed. Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2005).

³⁵⁰ In 1952 the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram was created, designed to work with tribal communities; the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, designed to counter communist influence among labour, in 1955. Later offspring came with the creation of the Bharat Vikas Parishad, focused on work among poor

During the years following 1948, and despite the fact that the ban was lifted in July 1949, the RSS remained fiercely opposed to the Nehruvian state, not only in organizational terms but also in terms of its rejection of its discourse based on the promotion of developmentalist and modernizing vision and the discussion of issues of poverty, rights and secularism.³⁵¹

In a very literal sense then, during these years the RSS worked hard to materialize a project very similar to that put forward by JP for the growth of a popular socialist movement in 1948. According to the latter, such a movement would have to be based on “enlisting the co-operation of hundreds of thousands of selfless workers to whom the seats of power offer no attraction” and the promotion of constructive work in favour of the creation of “a sound trade union movement”, “co-operative communities in the villages”, and of “creating cultural influences that (went) down even to the most backward sections of the people.”³⁵² Moreover, the rapid spread of the RSS’s influence among the society of India in the postcolonial period coincided with the years of JP’s turn away from *raj niti* and of his increasing involvement with constructive work, through the promotion of *bhoodan* and through the activities taking place in his *ashram* in Bihar.

In this sense, it is clear that JP’s drift towards *lok niti* during this time brought him close, in discursive and political terms, to the forces of Hindu nationalism. However, while the latter framed their constructive work with discussions regarding the unity of blood and the purity of culture, JP remained interested in the mobilizational unity provided by the framework of civilization developed during the early decades of the XX century.

Given these affinities and points of contact it is possible to affirm that the focus of the RSS and JP during the years following the transfer of power shared not only a common matrix, but also that both were contributing to the creation of

communities in health related issues, in 1963, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in 1964, the Bharatiya Sikshan Mandal (teachers) in 1969, the Vidya Bharati (students) in 1976 and the Bharat Kisan Sabha (peasants) in 1979.

³⁵¹ Ray and Katzenstein, "Introduction. In the Beginning There Was the Nehruvian State; Sarkar, "Problems of Social Power and the Discourses of the Hindu Right."

³⁵² Annual Report of the General Secretary, Socialist Party, Sixth Annual Conference, Nasik, 19-21 March 1948, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, 240-41.

a sphere of anti-statist and constructive political work in independent India which would widen considerably in later decades and which would be crucial for the social and political transformations of the 1970s and 80s.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has been devoted to analysing JP's definitive estrangement from political materialism, the institutions of the state and political parties. I have argued that, having started during his imprisonment in Lahore Fort between 1943 and 1945, this process culminated in the second half of the 1950s with his outspoken defence and promotion of the political culture of protest of *lok niti*.

JP's thought and political position during the years dealt with in this chapter developed along three main lines: the defence of an image of a virtuous community confronted with a corrupt state; an effort to project an ideal of a virtuous polity marked by a practice of voluntarism, constructive work and an ethics of self-sacrifice; and an investment in the transformation of individual and social attitudes rather than the conquest of the state. In recent decades, these strands of thought have been studied as central components to what has been termed antipolitics.³⁵³ Despite its negative connotations, the latter is not seen in this body of work as a negation of politics, but rather as a "political attitude" bent on exploiting the "blind areas" and "shadows" of institutional politics in an effort to transform its rules.³⁵⁴ In this sense, the material analysed in this chapter shows that JP's defence of *lok niti* during the 1950s and 1960s was an example of the two families of antipolitical rhetoric described by Andreas Schedler: one that seeks to "colonize" politics in order to infuse it with new meanings and values, and another that sought to banish the practice of institutional politics altogether.³⁵⁵ At the same time, it can also be seen as an expression of the

³⁵³ For different perspectives on the debate on antipolitics, see: Andreas Schedler, *The End of Politics? Explorations into Modern Antipolitics* (London: Macmillan, 1997); Mastropaolo, *Is Democracy a Lost Cause? : Paradoxes of an Imperfect Invention*; Hindess, "Antipolitical Motifs in Western Political Discourse"; Campus, *Antipolitics in Power. Populist Language as a Tool for Government*; Alessiato, "Antipolitics as Participation: Paradox and Challenges."

³⁵⁴ "Antipolitics as Participation: Paradox and Challenges."

³⁵⁵ Schedler, "Introduction: Antipolitics--Closing and Colonizing the Public Sphere."

defence of the notion that people external to political “power-machines” are automatically better in terms of morality, reliability and competence than those belonging to the party-apparatuses, a tendency that has been described as central to diverse strands of antipolitics.³⁵⁶ Moreover, JP’s political thought after the early 1950s developed along a markedly populist logic, according to the formulation of Ernesto Laclau,³⁵⁷ in which the separation of the people (*lok*) and power (*raj*) was of fundamental import for the promotion of popular action.

In this chapter, I have also argued that, following the transfer of power, JP forcefully defended the revolutionary affinities of Marx and Gandhi, and promoted the need to unite their programmes in order to effectively counter the decadence of the Congress and the increasingly power-centred politics of the national state. During this time, socialism remained the goal of JP’s political programme. However, he became convinced that the ideals of socialism could not be reached through the state. This led him to a revaluation of the revolutionary capabilities of Gandhian techniques, and the potential of constructive work. I have argued that, conceptually, both figures were brought together through their concern with what Akeel Bilgrami has termed an “unalienated life,” a concept that preceded others like freedom or equality as the aim of political and intellectual action within certain critical strands of enlightenment thought.

If alienation for Gandhi appeared as the product of satanic modern civilization, and for Marx as the result of the exploitative dynamics of capitalism, it can be argued that for JP alienation emerged as the result of the ways in which the practice of power politics, or *raj niti*, stifled solidarity, voluntarism and direct popular action. JP’s emphasis on bringing together Marx and Gandhi through their focus on alienation further upholds our claim that he must thus be seen as one of the most important continuators and renovators of radical early XX century political thought. While Gandhi expressed a distrust of politics, the radically un-religious Jayaprakash suggested that the path towards the attainment of an unalienated life had to go necessarily through activism and militancy, and could

³⁵⁶ Alessiato, “Antipolitics as Participation: Paradox and Challenges,” 18-19.

³⁵⁷ Laclau, *On Populist Reason*.

only be completed through the transformative power of politics. However, this had to be a different kind of politics, capable of resisting the corrupting influence of power, representing the true interests of the people, and eventually performing a true transformation in the nature of society and the individual. In this sense, I have argued, JP's period of moving away from the institutions of the state and political parties, which culminated in the second half of the 1950s, presents the origin of *lok niti*.

Likewise, after the 1950s JP began echoing early XX century radicalism and approaching the ideal of *swaraj* through the lens of autonomy rather than independence, a goal that had been central to his programme as a socialist leader during the 1930s and 40s. In this sense, JP's approach to *swaraj* during this later phase was decidedly Gandhian. However, he complemented the goal of *swaraj* during these years with the "noble ideals of socialism", namely the creation of a new society and a new man. All these strands of thought came together in his defence of *lok niti*, a political culture capable of engaging with different spheres of politics, and focused on society as the site for authentic transformation and emancipation.

In this sense, I have argued that JP's vision during these years had important affinities with the programme of Hindu nationalism promoted by the RSS. This is most clear in the way in which both focused on the regeneration of social life and the pursuit of constructive work and the creation of a variously defined *dharmic* community. This closeness between JP's *lok niti* and the RSS reveals their common debt to the matrix of early XX century radical nationalism, as well as their importance for the consolidation of a space of anti-statist politics of protest which would involve numerous different groups in the following decades, notably those identified with the tag of New Social Movements following the 1970s.

Having renounced all his political posts, JP joined Vinoba's *Bhoodan* movement in 1954, and devoted the following years to contributing to social constructive work. Even though *Bhoodan* lost steam during the 1960s, Jayaprakash remained committed to the formation of a *Shanti Sena*, or army of

volunteers, and the promotion of constructive work and the cause of *sarvodaya* throughout that decade. His final break from his old socialist comrades came in 1957, when he declared the importance of thinking of Gandhi's *sarvodaya* as the only true form of "people's socialism". In spite of this break, he would remain focused on socialism, a cause he redefined during the 1950s and 60s in contrast to the projects and ideas of former collaborators and friends. In the next chapter I will discuss and contrast the thought and action of JP during these years with those of two of the most important defendants of socialism during the time: Rammanohar Lohia and Jawaharlal Nehru.

5. Socialism and protest in postcolonial India: Jayaprakash, Lohia and Nehru (1952-1967)

In previous chapters I have argued that socialism remained the goal of JP's politics ever since the 1930s, and even following his rejection of institutional politics after the early 1950s. In this sense, socialism must be seen as the final goal of his promotion of *lok niti*. In this chapter the idea will be developed that, during the 1950s and 60s, a battle for the appropriation and redefinition of the label and meanings of socialism took place in India. This was a time when socialism ceased to be the sole patrimony of the leftist opposition to become an integral part of the official rhetoric of the national state, mainly as a result of Nehru's statist socialist leanings, and his enormous influence in the national and international scenes. The statist brand of socialism that emerged during these years would be consolidated following Nehru's death as the basic roadmap for socio-economic policies in India during the late 1960s and 1970s. However, and despite the adoption of the mission of socialism by the Indian state, it will be shown that during these years socialism also remained a central category for doctrines and practices of protest in India.

The pages that follow will contrast and juxtapose the meanings given to socialism by JP, Lohia and Nehru. All three identified socialism with the possibility of a radical transformation of society and, through it, the coming of a new civilization. As a result of their differing conceptions of revolution, however, the shape and possible outcomes of this transformation were imagined in entirely different ways by each of them. By privileging the exploration of the affinities and disagreements between Jayaprakash and Lohia, I will argue that their approach to socialism in the decades following independence was marked by a common thrust of opposition vis-à-vis the policies and assumptions of the Nehruvian state. In this sense, it will be shown that this was a period marked by a protest over meanings, which would not materialize in significant institutional gains but that would open up a space for the emergence of original conceptions of socialism wholly unrelated to anything known by that name in Europe or elsewhere. As a

result, the discussions around socialism of this period inaugurated a set of political trajectories important to contemporary political horizon in India. Moreover, these debates made clear the possibilities and limits of the political culture of *lok niti* and its prioritizing of autonomy and freedom over concerns of economic development and equality.

In the opening section I will introduce the broad contours of the positions defended by these three figures in the early years following independence and set the stage for the later analysis of the points of contact and contrast between them. Given that Nehru's take on socialism has been widely analysed and that JP's thought has been already discussed in previous pages, this section will focus primarily on Lohia's trajectory and ideas. The second section will be devoted to tracing the points of contact and difference between Lohia's and JP's attacks on the Nehruvian model of socialist development through an exercise of analysis and contrast between the former's doctrine of the small machine and the latter's emphasis on *sarvodaya* and generosity; this section will also deal with the fundamental opposition between JP and Lohia's politics, which stemmed from the incompatibility of reconciling JP's emphasis on the notion of freedom and Lohia's insistence on the importance of equality. In this section, the fundamental incompatibility between Lohia's politics and JP's defence of *lok niti* is explored. Finally, in the third section, I will approach the definitive parting between the three most important defendants of socialism during these decades as the result of the development of contending and incompatible projects of social revolution, and ponder upon the implications of these conflicts and divergences for the development of JP's *lok niti* politics of protest in the years immediately prior to the climatic social agitation of the early 1970s.

5.1 The meanings of socialism

5.1.1 Three brands of socialism for India

There is considerable confusion in the public mind and, even within the Congress party itself, regarding our policy socialism.
Indira Gandhi, 1965.³⁵⁸

The 1950s were marked by the gradual consolidation of the Congress as the party of the state, and the crystallisation of the image of Nehru as the symbol of the aspirations and potentialities of independent India. As a young man, Nehru had been interested in Fabian socialism, and had looked upon favourably at the Soviet regime as an example of the possibilities of socialism for the transformation of society. In his famous address as President of the All India Congress Committee delivered at Lucknow in 1936, Nehru openly expressed his allegiance to socialism, which he defined as being “a philosophy of life” that, in the last instance, aimed at effecting “a change in our instincts and habits and desires”, and represented the possibility of “a new civilization, radically different from the present capitalist order.”³⁵⁹ Having remained close to the Left Wing of the Congress during the 1930s and 40s, Nehru favoured socialism as an integral part of the project of modernization of independent India after becoming Prime Minister in 1947. In his view, socialism essentially meant state control over the means of production, and the development of economic planning that favoured rapid industrialization and aimed at an increase in production that would vanquish poverty and scarcity from India. In his words, socialism effectively would provide “every individual in the State should have equal opportunity for progress.”³⁶⁰

In chapter 3, I showed that during the 1930s and 40s Jayaprakash conceived of socialism as the only political program capable of radicalizing the Congress and the freedom movement; later on, this conception would be complemented by his attempts to use socialism as a framework for a form of

³⁵⁸ Indira Gandhi, "Foreword by Indira Gandhi, Minister for Information and Broadcasting," in *Congressmen's Primer for Socialism*, ed. H. D. Malaviya (New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1965).

³⁵⁹ Presidential Address, Indian National Congress, forty-ninth session, April 1936, Lucknow, in Jawaharlal Nehru, *Nehru on Socialism : Selected Speeches and Writings* (New Delhi, India: Perspective Publications, 1964), 67.

³⁶⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru, Speech at the All India Congress Committee, cited in Ghose, *Socialism and Communism in India*, 206.

politics of opposition and revolution capable of counteracting what he termed the forces of reaction in India. Subsequently, during the 1950s, as we argued in the fourth chapter, JP approached *sarvodaya* and Gandhian thought as tools capable of carrying forward the project of socialism, which, ever since his imprisonment in Lahore Fort, he had begun to equate with a project of moral transformation beyond the limits of materialism.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, during this decade JP would retreat from party politics and drift towards constructive non-statist *sarvodaya*. His surrender of all institutional affiliations after 1952—including his role as a union organizer and head of the Socialist Party—marked the end of his two decade long ideological and political leadership of left wing sectors of anticolonial politics. I have advanced that, despite his drift towards *lok niti* and increasing defence of Gandhian vocabularies and practices of protest during the 1950s, Jayaprakash would still defend the attainment of socialism as the ultimate goal of his political programme. At the same time, starting in 1952 he would consistently associate socialism with the result of the transformation of man and society through the idea of the limitation of wants and the promotion of cooperativeness, voluntarism, self-sacrifice and what he referred to as incentives for goodness. Indeed, during these years JP would equate the concept of *sarvodaya*—defined in terms of a Gandhian horizon of moral principles and revolutionary technologies wielded in the pursuit of a more just social order—with socialism. If for Jayaprakash *lok niti* stood as the only virtuous and acceptable culture of politics suitable for India, then *sarvodaya* can be seen as the socialism such a practice was capable of generating. Indeed, as we will see in this chapter, JP's insistence on the "re-creation" of human community in a way that allowed a space for genuine human freedom—freedom from the abuses of arbitrary power, the alienation caused by modern socio-political formations and the limiting scope of Western democratic politics that prevented man from taking control over his own life—could be formulated in terms of his broader political programme as the coming together of the practice of *lok niti* and the ideal of *sarvodaya*.

For his part, Rammanohar Lohia developed an open-ended conception of socialism based on an impetuous vernacular and anti-elitist stance regarding political power and the role and management of the state. This socialism, he argued, could only be implemented by competing with the Congress in the arena of institutional politics. In other words, he did not reject the logic of *raj niti*. For him, as for Nehru, institutional politics were the means of social transformation and nation-building. His agenda for party politics could not be based on the promotion of a virtuous practice of protest, like in the case of JP, but had necessarily to engage in the creation of political majorities by “empowering and politically uniting the socially discriminated, economically oppressed and culturally marginalised groups—all occupying similarly disadvantaged locations in the social structure.”³⁶¹ Unlike JP, Lohia’s fundamental concern was with equality. Through his critique of JP’s romantic take on the society of India and his systematic denunciation of its hierarchies, Lohia was asserting the impossibility of a pure *lok* such as the one defended by Jayaprakash and implicitly invoked by other defendants of *sarvodaya*, like Vinoba Bhave. A further point of contention between JP and Lohia during the 1950s emerged from their differing positions regarding the village as a model political community. While Jayaprakash, as we have seen, found in the villages the fundamental space for the development of *lok niti* and the repository of all the virtues of the multitude, Lohia identified the villages as spaces of arbitrary power, embodied in the trinity formed by “vested interests, the police and village goondas.”³⁶²

The 1950s and early 60s saw the development of Lohia’s ideological and intellectual project, the originality and intellectual potency of which was contrasted by its dismal political failure in electoral terms. Following JP’s distancing from party politics, Lohia arose as the most important and visible figure in the ranks of the new Socialist Party. At the same time, during the years considered in this chapter, Lohia emerged as the most vocal representative of

³⁶¹ Ghanshyam Shah, “Ram Manohar Lohia on Caste in Indian Politics,” in *Caste and Democratic Politics in India*, ed. D. L. Seth (Delhi: Permanent Black 2004), 119.

³⁶² Rammanohar Lohia, “Hero of Ghazipur”, september 1953, in Kapoor, *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, 121.

anti-Congressism and a virulent critic of what he termed “the Nehru myth.”³⁶³ As early as 1950, Lohia denounced how the process through which “(t)he Indian State ha(d) become the Congress Government(,) (t)he Congress Government ha(d) become the Congress Party and the Congress Party (was) fast becoming the Prime Minister”, as the beginning of a “true dictatorship” inside the ruling party.³⁶⁴ In his view, the revolutionary potential that had been inherited from the radical thrust of the anticolonial freedom movement was being arrested by the project of modernization defended by the elites of independent India, in which “criminal luxury and waste (were) concealed under the deceptive slogans of national dignity and needs of representation.”³⁶⁵ Lohia denounced Nehru as the leader and main promoter of this harmful project, and consequently directed some of his most virulent attacks against the figure of the Primer Minister. This strategy, coupled with a similar dismissive and aggressive approach towards communists, would contribute to Lohia’s gradual political marginalization during the first two decades of independent life in India.

Lohia and JP were two of the founding members of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934, and had remained close friends and collaborators till the early 1950s. Both had worked together promoting open revolt during the Quit India Movement and, as a result, had subsequently shared imprisonment in the infamous Lahore Fort. Their closeness at the time becomes evident when reading JP’s diary kept during his time in prison, where he describes his meeting with Lohia as a more joyful event than the liberation of Paris from Nazi rule.³⁶⁶ Nevertheless during the following years, and especially after JP’s fast in 1952, Lohia would gradually distance himself from his old friend, and would remain consistently dismissive and scornful of JP’s growing involvement in constructive work and embrace of *sarvodaya*. In Lohia’s view, JP’s rejection of materialism and participation in the *Bhoodan* movement complemented the dictatorial

³⁶³ Cited in Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 217.

³⁶⁴ “Programme to End Poverty”, 1950 in Rammanohar Lohia, “Programme to End Poverty,” *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (2011): 23.

³⁶⁵ Rammanohar Lohia, 1966, in “Revolution Arrested,” *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (2011): 52.

³⁶⁶ 25 Oct 1944, “A Visitor Comes to My Cosmos”, *In the Lahore Fort: Random Jottings and Letters*, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. III (1939-1946), 233.

tendencies of Nehru's elitist politics. After 1952, Lohia would refer to both Nehru's "governmental Gandhism" and Vinoba's "monastic Gandhism" as complementary obstacles to the establishment of socialism in India.³⁶⁷

5.1.2 Jayaprakash and Lohia: contrasting trajectories

The experiential and political trajectories of Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia, founding members of the Congress Socialist Party and two of the most important thinkers of socialism in India, intersected in meaningful and revealing ways. In chapters two and three, I described the young JP as a non-elite revolutionary inspired by the radical thrust of the *swadeshi* movement. Almost ten years younger, Lohia's initial radicalism, although emerging from a similar background, was shaped by a different trajectory up to the 1930s and a different position within the nationalist ranks during the last to decades of British rule in India.

Born in Faizabad district, United Provinces, in 1910 and son of an active nationalist and follower of Gandhi, Lohia pursued his initial studies in Bombay, Benares and Calcutta before traveling abroad to pursue a degree in higher education. His departure from India, in late 1929, coincided with the return of the young Jayaprakash from the United States. Lohia initially travelled to London, but soon decided to leave the capital of Empire for Berlin, an important point of communist effervescence as well as a "centre of Indian intrigue"³⁶⁸ frequented during the previous years by anticolonial revolutionaries such as M. N. Roy and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. Although the motivations behind his choice of Berlin over London remain unclear—a biographer has explained the move as the result of his early radical nationalist unease³⁶⁹—the unusual decision presents us an image of young Lohia as a man "imbued with the spirit of discovering a new

³⁶⁷ Rammanohar Lohia, *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism* (Hyderabad, India,: Navahind, 1963), I-XXIV.

³⁶⁸ Manjapra, M. N. Roy : *Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism*, 76.

³⁶⁹ Indumati Kelkar, *Dr. Rammanohar Lohia: His Life and Philosophy* (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2009), 33.

world, which was not bounded by Thomas Cook, Ballard Pier, Tilbury Docks, Gower Street, three or four years in England and back.”³⁷⁰

Both California in the early 1920s—the time of JP’s arrival—and Berlin during the late part of the decade were relevant centers of anticolonial activity, involving the agitation behind the creation of the *Ghadar* party in the first case, and that of international communist revolutionaries in the second. However, the experience of Lohia as a student abroad was very different from that of JP. Unlike Jayaprakash, Lohia never thoroughly discussed this period of his life, nor wrote about it; nevertheless, there is enough evidence to trace a few relevant distinctions between the international experiences of the two young socialists. For one, it is possible to assume that, unlike JP—who was employed in a wide variety of activities, from packing vegetables along other migrant workers to selling complexion creams to African-Americans³⁷¹—Lohia remained a full-time student in Berlin, since it was not allowed at the time for foreign students to be legally employed in Germany.³⁷² Further, JP enjoyed great physical mobility in the United States, moving as he did from California to Iowa and finally to Wisconsin, while Lohia seems to have remained in Berlin for the length of his stay abroad. Likewise, the subjects of their dissertations were very different and revealing of their later intellectual and political inclinations: JP wrote on the theoretical and abstract subject of “Cultural Variation” and discussed the different approaches to truth and knowledge across different cultures³⁷³; on the other hand, Lohia’s dissertation versed on the very specific and grounded issue of salt taxation in British India.³⁷⁴ Finally, while JP admitted to his fascination and intellectual engagement with Marxist thought during his stay in the United States, Lohia seems to have been less constrained by Marxism and more open to

³⁷⁰ Mahdi Ali Mirza, *Welcome Each Rebuff* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1950), xii. Cited in Joachim Oesterheld, “Lohia as a Doctoral Student in Berlin,” *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010): 86.

³⁷¹ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 59-60.

³⁷² Oesterheld, “Lohia as a Doctoral Student in Berlin,” 86.

³⁷³ Jayaprakash Narayan, *Cultural Variation: A Thesis Presented for the Degree of Master of Arts, Ohio State University, 1929*, Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. I (1929-1935), 1-40.

³⁷⁴ Oesterheld, “Lohia as a Doctoral Student in Berlin.”

different strands of thought while in Germany, as is made clear by his own testimony: "I did not like the German Socialists, but my intellectual kinship was with them. Emotionally, I was with the communists for their warm-heartedness and the Nazis for their anti-British passions, which were to me at least pro-man passions."³⁷⁵

Shortly after his return to India, Lohia was imprisoned as a result of his active participation in the Civil Disobedience movement. During his period inside Nasik jail, Lohia would become part of the founding group of the Congress Socialist Party (1934). Throughout the 1930s he would work as an editor of the party's periodical, the *Congress Socialist*, and remained one of the most important organizers of the Left Wing of the Congress, a faction led by JP. During that time, Lohia would distinguish himself from most of his socialist colleagues by his open intellectual anti-elitism, managing to irritate and antagonize a few of them with his unconventional style and demeanor. Madhu Limaye credits Narendra Deva, the most senior member and first president of the CSP, with reprimanding Lohia and insisting "that he should not waste his time in the company of *lafanga* (riff-raff) at the Coffe House."³⁷⁶

Apprehended during the Quit India agitation, Lohia would once again share imprisonment with JP inside the Lahore Fort, where both friends would be subjected to torture and solitary confinement. The experience generated a strong bond of closeness between them that would gradually dissolve during the first years of the 1950s.

5.1.3 Lohia's socialism: doctrinal brilliance and political failure

After the transfer of power, both of them would be opposed to the transformation of the Congress into the party of government; however, as we saw in the previous chapter, JP would commit himself to a non-statist project of

³⁷⁵ Kelkar, *Dr. Rammanohar Lohia: His Life and Philosophy*, 77. In Oesterheld, "Lohia as a Doctoral Student in Berlin," 88.

³⁷⁶ Madhu Limaye, *Galaxy of the Indian Socialist Leaders* (New Delhi: B.R. Pub. Corp., 2000), 85. Parenthesis in original.

opposition encompassed under the tag of *lok niti* following 1952, while Lohia decided to take the road of party opposition and eventually took over the leadership of the Socialist Party, formed in 1948. In the first general elections of 1951, the SP secured 12 seats in the Lok Sabha, 6 less than the Communist Party of India CPI, and a mere trifle compared to the 364 obtained by the Congress.³⁷⁷ Following this electoral failure, the SP merged with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party in 1952 to form the Praja Socialist Party under Lohia's leadership. Despite the merger, the electoral potency of the socialists was further weakened by JP's outspoken rejection of all political parties during the late 1950s. The PSP marginally increased its number of seats in 1957, from 12 to 19, but still lagged behind the CPI (27) and the Congress (371).³⁷⁸ In the following years, Lohia abandoned the PSP to form his own Socialist Party and, in 1964, renewed the alliance to form the Samyukta Socialist Party. By the time of his death in 1967, the SSP was the largest socialist political party in India, but remained unable to challenge the potency of the Congress or the communists in electoral terms.

The poor political performance of Rammanohar Lohia as the leader of different Socialist parties during the 1950s and early 60s contrasts with the novelty and audacity of his thought during that time. Despite being very active as a politician and organizer, Lohia managed to develop a potent critique of the shortcomings of orthodox Marxian thought as well as an original philosophy of history, which will be discussed in the third section of this chapter, and a programme for an original form of socialism for India. More than any other socialist leader of his time, he reflected upon issues of caste, gender, language diversity and vernacular knowledge in the course of his intellectual development. His focus on the specificities and concrete needs of Indian society, however, did not prevent him from taking into consideration the contingencies of the international arena and devising a plan for a global Parliament. His open-ended vision of socialism was shaped by an awareness of international events, as well

³⁷⁷ "Statistical Report on General Elections, 1951, to First Lok Sabha."

³⁷⁸ "Statistical Report on General Elections, 1957, to Second Lok Sabha," (New Delhi: Election Commission of India, 1957).

as by the deeply felt need to go beyond what he considered to be the elitism of Nehruvian statist modernisation and the potentially violent programme of Indian communists.

Lohia expressed his belief in the need to bring about a new civilization that could overcome the failure of modern western civilization, which had reached its limits with the invention of the atom bomb and had “enveloped the world with fear and hatred.”³⁷⁹ His vision of the future emerged from a fundamental criticism of Marxism’s incapacity to think through the constitutive relationship between capitalism and imperialism. Unlike JP, who during his youth and early years as leader of the Congress Socialist Party had remained a convinced Marxist, Lohia would very early on denounce the limitations of applying Marxian principles to non-western and colonial settings. In his essay “Economics after Marx”, written during the Quit India movement while in hiding from the colonial authorities, Lohia observed:

Marx’s initial fallacy was to have examined capitalism in the abstract, to have wrenched it outside of its imperialist context. Marx was not unaware of imperialist exploitation and his disciple, Lenin, was even more keenly aware of it. But, imperialism is with both Marx and Lenin a tumour of capitalism, an odorous after-growth and this has at best awakened an unintelligent concern for the colonial races. Marxism has therefore not been able to give a consistent theory of capitalist development. Its picture of capitalism is that of a West European entity, with the later additions of the American and Japanese forms, more or less wrenched out of the world, more or less developing internally. All the dynamic of capitalism is placed within its internal structure, in the contradiction between the value and the use-value of labour-power, between the working class and the capitalist class of the self-evolving structure. Marx’s capitalism was that of a self-moving West European circle, no doubt, causing great repercussions in the outside world, but the principle and laws of its own movement were exclusively internal. Marxism to this day remains stuck in this picture, no doubt formulating laws about these outside repercussions, but is wholly unable to state the basic interacting principle of the two, internal and external, movements of capital.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁹ “Principle of Equal Irrelevance” (1956) in Lohia, *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, 245.

³⁸⁰ “Economics after Marx”, in *ibid.*, 16.

Lohia denounced Marxism as Eurocentric and thus as a doctrine unable to account for the link between capitalist accumulation and colonialism, as well as the existence of what he termed internal capitalism in countries like India, a phenomenon that caused similar socioeconomic imbalances and inequalities to arise *within* the country as those observable between the country and its former colonial metropolis.³⁸¹ However revolutionary it might appear as a doctrine, he argued, Marxism remained tied to a colonial logic that favoured the preservation of the “the status quo, at least that part of the status quo which means European glory.” In this sense, Lohia assured that “(t)he effort of Marx was, after all, a colossal construction of the mind to keep the smile on the visage of Europe ever dancing.”³⁸²

Lohia’s critique of Marxism also entailed a revision of the teleology of historical materialism. In this regard, he observed:

The illiterate hope of making one’s own century the last word yet in human progress and of making Western Civilisation the centre of the entire world and the measuring rod for all previous civilisation is dying out. (...) To divide the history of the world into ancient, medieval and modern periods and to ascribe to them an ascent, linear or broken, is cultural barbarism, not even interesting.³⁸³

In a broader sense, Lohia wanted to point out the way in which “such abstractions as capitalism, communism or even socialism”³⁸⁴ took the history of Europe as their implicit reference and were thus useless in non-Western settings. Lohia was not concerned with pointing out the limitations of Marxism simply for the sake of making an intellectual argument. He was deeply worried about the possible harmful results of implanting such a partial historical and political logic to a non-western setting. In this sense, he warned that in India “any attempt (...) to achieve the modern civilisation, which the world has known for the past 300 years, must result in barren cruelty, cruelty which knows no success.”³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Ibid., 26.

³⁸² *Wheel of History* (Hyderabad: Navahind, 1955), 23.

³⁸³ Ibid., 8.

³⁸⁴ *Interval During Politics* (Hyderabad: Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyasa, 1979), 94.

³⁸⁵ “Marxism and Socialism”, Speech given in Hyderabad, August 1952, in *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, 109.

His objections to Marxism were complemented by his open critique of the “leadership of sterile Marxists” in recently decolonized countries, a group in which he included Nehru and his fellow champions of Non-Alignment during the late 1950s, Nkrumah and Sukarno.³⁸⁶ In Lohia’s view, the rulers of the newly created countries of Asia and Africa had “arrested revolution” in their lands by adopting the “mode of modernisation of the consumption of their elite, before they (had) modernized the production modes of their masses.”³⁸⁷ In this way the “criminal luxury and waste” of the national elites was hindering the possibility of a true revolutionary change towards greater social equality and perpetuating “natural greed and indolence” in these countries. In an early formulation of later subalternist and postcolonial critical positions, Lohia observed in 1958 that:

Post-freedom India is but a strict continuance of British India in most essential ways. The Indian people continue to be disinherited. They are foreigners in their own land. Their languages are suppressed and their bread is snatched away from them. All this is done for the alleged sake of certain high principles.³⁸⁸

Lohia’s attack was also aimed at postcolonial communists. In his view, by focusing solely on destroying the “relationships of capitalism” without questioning the forces of production used by capitalism, the project of communists in “India or China (...) must inevitably lead to disaster.” Therefore, the task of socialism was a double one and went beyond the limited project of communism: it had to “destroy the capitalist class as well as (...) the methods of production which capitalism has given to the world.”³⁸⁹ In order to avoid in India the cruelty that would result from implanting a foreign model of Marxism Lohia pointed towards the need to create a new kind of socialism, equidistantly separated from Marxian communism and Western capitalism. In political terms, this position, which he referred to as the principle of equal irrelevance, represented the continuity of the programme of the Congress Socialist Party developed during the 1930s, which focused on simultaneously resisting the advance of the communists and

³⁸⁶ “Revolution Arrested,” 53.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 52.

³⁸⁸ “Caste,” *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (2011): 30.

³⁸⁹ “Marxism and Socialism”, in *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, 109-10.

countering the influence of the capitalist-minded members of the Right wing of the Congress.

In his rejection of Marxism, Lohia's vision of socialism implied nothing less than the coming of a new civilization. Thus, he declared that the likely "debacle of capitalism and communism is easily understood when they are viewed as parts of a single civilization that appears to have neared the end of its voyage."³⁹⁰ Lohia's new socialism required going beyond "mind-imperialism" and awakening those "colonials of the mind" that unknowingly perpetuated the power of the privileged and the hostility of the underdog.³⁹¹ For this, it was necessary to identify the possibility of alternative sources and points of origin for a new socialist civilization. Following a line of thought similar to that of JP following his imprisonment at Lahore Fort, Lohia identified Gandhi as the only original political thinker of the twentieth century, and saw in Gandhian thought the seeds for a new brand of revolutionary socialism. Like JP, Lohia would positively re-evaluate the revolutionary potential of Gandhi's politics, especially of the Mahatma's emphasis on the importance of economic decentralization and his defence of *satyagraha* or civil disobedience.

Lohia, however, only accepted the revolutionary validity of the Mahatma's thought when posited as part of an oppositional programme of politics; when put to the service of government or administration, Gandhism became harmfully conservative and counterrevolutionary.³⁹² Like Jayaprakash, Lohia exalted Gandhi's anti-statist stance on social transformation and defended socialism as the only viable political option for independent India. However, Lohia's appropriation of the revolutionary potentialities of socialism was radically opposed to that of JP. While the latter had come to think of socialism as the result of a moral transformation of society effected through an emphasis on self-sacrifice and non-statist voluntary action, for Lohia socialism remained defined as a horizon structured by the possibilities of institutional political action and modern

³⁹⁰ Rammanohar Lohia's Presidential Address at the Pachmarhi Convention of the Socialist Party, 23 May 1952, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), Appendix 21, 479.

³⁹¹ Rammanohar Lohia, "On Hidden Imperialisms," *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (2011): 49.

³⁹² "Preface" in *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, xiii.

technology. In other words, Lohia would never reject the imperative of acting in the sphere of power defined by JP as *raj niti*; rather, he sought to revolutionize it through an appreciation of India's specific conflicts and possibilities and a vocal opposition to the Nehruvian project of economic development. For this reason, Lohia would remain active in party politics and openly chastise JP for his defence of *lok niti*. For Lohia, and in this he drifted closer to Nehru, socialism had to be promoted from the state.

5.2 Two Socialist critiques of the development project of the Nehruvian state

5.2.1 Lohia's views on alternative development and JP's village development

During the 1950s and 1960s both Jayaprakash and Lohia would deploy sustained attacks on the national state's policies of economic development, which they conceived of as the noxious result of the elitism and excessive reliance of Nehruvian socialism on western models. Both expanded their critique by invoking the socialist trope of a new civilization and by appealing to Gandhi's stance on economic decentralization and rejection of "satanic" modern civilization.

In the previous chapter we saw how JP vehemently opposed Nehru's conception of politics by appealing to the domain of *lok niti*, an offshoot of the revolutionary impetus of the anticolonial agitations of *swadeshi* and Non-Cooperation. As a result of his involvement in *Bhoodan* and the *Sarvodaya* movement during these years, JP would complement the anti-statist ideal of political action of *lok niti* by tracing the contours of a never entirely defined programme of decentralized, village-based economic development. Starting in 1951, even before his life-changing fast, JP had made clear his defence of the village as the only possible starting point of true socioeconomic change, and of village-dwellers as the only agents capable of effecting and authentic transformation of society in India. In a speech delivered at Dekuli, Bihar, in March 1951, JP referred to village-based voluntarism as the only option available to counter the harmful elitist policies of the national state by declaring: "The village is ours. Pandit Nehru will not come to our villages for building roads and doing

sanitation work.”³⁹³ According to him, the inhabitants of the villages could not expect to receive any help from the state, and should instead take the issue of economic development into their own hands: “You have strength in your hands. You should utilize it fully for your own benefit. You should build roads and plant trees on their sides, which may be used as fuels. You can make invaluable manure by saving cow-dung. Sitting together in villages you should prepare schemes for irrigation work. (...) This work can be done collectively also.”³⁹⁴

JP saw community development as a fundamental prerequisite for the successful and inclusive economic development of independent India. The villages had to be transformed into “self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial (...) local communities” that could form the basis for a “meaningful, understandable (and) controllable” ³⁹⁵ socioeconomic dynamic capable of resisting the onslaught of centralization and bureaucratization. In his view, the postcolonial project of socioeconomic development was in fact carrying on with the process of destruction of the Indian village which British rule had promoted during 200 hundred years of colonial domination. In short, community development meant going beyond a mere concern with “industrial development, education, communication and electrification” and focusing on the “the development of the spiritual community (and) of a climate in which families living in rural communities might come together to live a cooperative life.”³⁹⁶ JP’s message to the villages of India was complemented by an appeal to the elites of India, in which he advocated for a voluntary limitation of wants that amounted to a “rejection of materialism or the unlimited pursuit of material satisfaction.”³⁹⁷

Both lines of arguments—the identification of the village as the only site of economic transformation and the need to appeal to the curtailment of the materialist aspirations of the national elites—were developed alongside JP’s

³⁹³ Speech at Nava Nirmana Sammelan, Dekuli (Bihar), 12 March 1951, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 112.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

³⁹⁵ *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, 30 Sept 1959, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 489.

³⁹⁶ “Panchayati Raj and Democracy”, Presidential Address, All India Panchayat Parishad, New Delhi, 18 May 1966, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. IX (1969-1972), 34.

³⁹⁷ *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, 441.

defence of *Bhoodan* and *Sarvodaya*, and were consistent with his growingly vocal rejection of *raj niti* during the late 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, his defence of the village and denunciation of the elites must be seen as central tenets of his project of *lok niti* and of his attempt to redefine the possibilities of the political in postcolonial India. Likewise, these arguments also sustain his definition of socialism as a project of moral transformation of the individual in favour of a new society. However, despite being coherent with his overall project of anti-statist opposition, JP's stance on economic development remained fuzzy and ill defined, and did not go beyond the promotion of Gandhian notions of trusteeship and decentralization. His approach to the economy was shaped by his conviction of the importance of *lok niti*, and thus remained limited by the latter's undefined and broad logic.

Despite sharing JP's insistence on the importance of simple living and his rejection of the luxuries promoted by industrial capitalism, Rammanohar Lohia dismissed the former's project of empowering villages and promoting spiritual cooperativeness instead of industrial development as insufficient. Lohia identified the villages as spaces of arbitrary power, embodied in the trinity formed by "vested interests, the police and village goondas."³⁹⁸ Consequently, he was not interested in drawing upon Gandhian notions of trusteeship or village self-sufficiency. Instead, he would push Gandhi's early critique of modern civilization by insisting on a revolutionary approach to the potentialities of technology for the transformation of human society. Echoing some of the arguments developed in *Hind Swaraj*, Lohia described modern civilization, whether communist or capitalist, as a "complex consisting of production of remote effect, tool of remote production, democracy of remote second-rate application and even class struggle of remote justification."³⁹⁹ This modern civilization, he argued elsewhere, was based on the construction and extensive use of "monster-machines", designed to remain beyond the reach and comprehension of the "common man" and which remained "palpably connected with the waste of war, the uneconomy (sic.) of its

³⁹⁸ Rammanohar Lohia, "Hero of Ghazipur", september 1953, in Kapoor, *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, 121.

³⁹⁹ Lohia, *Wheel of History*, 82.

destructions as well as its preparations.”⁴⁰⁰ On the political sphere, a reliance on such monster-machines perpetuated the hidden imperialisms inside a country like India, and promoted the thriving of Euro-American superiority on a global scale. In the sphere of everyday life, the fixation with “complex tools and luxury” promoted the implementation across the planet of a “terrifyingly oppressive (...) model” of life spearheaded by “the whites of the world.”⁴⁰¹ This industrial model of economic development, Lohia posited, remained unquestioned by the two struggling systems of capitalism and communism. In this sense, he added, “Mr. Ford and Mr. Stalin share(d) each other’s attitudes on mass production and efficiency and high wages.”⁴⁰² In India, the pursuit of this shared dream of limitless industrialisation was reducing men to the state of beasts and turning postcolonial toilers into mere ghosts “invisibly moving the machines in imperial factories”⁴⁰³.

Lohia’s alternative to the harmful effects of the excessive reliance on monster-machines and industrialisation was articulated by bringing together the Gandhian insistence on economic decentralisation—also defended by JP—with the novel concept of the small machine. Despite never having fully developed what it entailed in practical terms, it is possible to extract the general principles of what Lohia meant by small machine from an analysis of his writings during the 1950s and early 60s. In broad terms, Lohia used the formula to refer to the development of a brand of decentralised industrial production aimed at the attainment of village autonomy—instead of self-sufficiency. In this sense, he was not advocating for a mere revivalism of cottage industries or a celebration of the insular and autarkist village. In his view, the questioning of technology did not necessarily have to entail relying on handicrafts and village markets. Thus he declared that the “basic problem (was) not to cut down the use of mechanical or electrical power but to make it available for production in the same small units in

⁴⁰⁰ “Preface”, in *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, iii.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁴⁰² Rammanohar Lohia’s Presidential Address at the Pachmarhi Convention of the Socialist Party, 23 May 1952, Apendix 21 in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 475.

⁴⁰³ “Economics After Marx”, in Lohia, *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, 24.

the manner in which it is available today for consumption in prosperous economies.”⁴⁰⁴ In this sense, he was arguing for a new and revolutionary approach to technology that would not aim solely towards an ever-increasing margin of material profit, but would nevertheless avoid the dead-end of a *tout court* rejection of materialism, like in the case of JP:

The only way to overcome industrial and scientific inequalities among nations would be, at least in theory, through the ushering in of a new civilization and a new technology. The materialist bull we dare not slay. Futile revivalists of cottage craft would alone attempt that, more in speech than in action. The materialist bull will have to be fed but held by the horns, so that a doctrine that combined truth with pleasure could be evolved. Small-unit machines, wherever possible, and mass production, whenever necessary, is a formula than which nothing more exact is possible. This may bring man as near to freedom from gold as possible; it would release him from a spirituality that is ever consumed by worries of materiality, the same as it would release him from a materiality that is ever aspiring to spirituality but never attaining it.⁴⁰⁵

Lohia’s appeal for a doctrine capable of holding the bull of materialism by the horns was complemented by his preoccupation with avoiding a simplistic approach to decentralization that would only be based on the defence of village economy. Indeed, he conceived of the small machine as being not merely “the product of decentralisation in space, which modern civilization in Europe and the US has started talking about and which keeps the existing principle of technology intact”, but rather as “the embodiment of the whole principle of decentralisation, in space and in time, so as to avoid complexity and achieve immediacy.” The small machine thus emerged not only as a viable solution to the economic problems of a country like India, but also as an alternative and enabling tool in “a new exploration (...) of the general aims of society”⁴⁰⁶. Lohia’s insistence on the need to fashion an economy based on small machines capable of tending to the needs of men without enslaving them in the manner of capitalism, entailed a parallel rejection of the centrality given to the state in communist projects of

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁰⁵ “Materiality and Spirituality”, speech given at Benares, 1953, in *ibid.*, 204.

⁴⁰⁶ Rammanohar Lohia’s Presidential Address at the Pachmarhi Convention of the Socialist Party, 23 May 1952, Appendix 21 in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 474.

development. In this sense, the small machine appeared as central to his goal of creating a new socialism befitting to the conditions of India. In his view, such a “genuine socialism would have to think in terms of destroying *both* the capitalist *relations of production* and the capitalist *forces of production*, or at least vastly remodelling them.”⁴⁰⁷ This socialism had to embrace the promises of technology and apply them to small-scale, decentralised, labour-intensive processes of production, which could reduce the disparity in the availability of capital.⁴⁰⁸ Furthermore, the revolutionary technology he was suggesting aimed not only at going beyond the limitations of both communism and capitalism, but was also at overcoming the “anxieties, tensions and general emptiness arising out of the insatiable hunger for increasing output.”⁴⁰⁹

Lohia’s harsh rejection of the “barren cruelty” of simplistic implantation of foreign models can be seen as an attack against Nehru’s policy of economic development. In an article written in 1960, Lohia would declare the following in reference to the way in which Indian “cosmopolites” uncritically adapted political and economic models from the West:

To India since the attainment of independence and the death of Mahatma Gandhi, cosmopolitanism came in the shape of European industrialization, which it accepted as a model for imitation. Not much discernment is needed to detect that the ruling party and with it all major political parties of the land possesses no policy whatever on any matter except in the sphere of industrialization. (...) A modern Indian is above all an industrial cosmopolite. He thinks that all solutions lie automatically within this great solution of industrialization. The problem of Hindu-Muslim hostility, of caste, of language and script, of character, of adulteration, of property have all been left untreated in the vain hope that with successful industrialization they would solve themselves. Such vain hopes are the daily bread of cosmopolites.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ “Marxism and Socialism”, in Lohia, *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, 110. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰⁸ See Amit Basole, “The Technology Question in Lohia,” *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010).

⁴⁰⁹ Rammanohar Lohia’s Presidential Address at the Pachmarhi Convention of the Socialist Party, 23 May 1952, Appendix 21 in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 479.

⁴¹⁰ Cosmopolitanism (October 1960), in Mastram Kapoor, ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, vol. 6 (Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011), 267.

Further on, Lohia denounces Nehru as the “leader of Indian cosmopolites”⁴¹¹ and attacks all the major politicians of the country for uncritically supporting the Nehruvian model of industrialisation, which, in his view, could only condemn India to second-rate capitalism and contribute to the unending political superiority of Euro-America.

Lohia’s concept of the small machine as an alternative to industrial process of economic development links to a broader preoccupation with the hierarchy of knowledge implicit in the Nehruvian project, which denied validity of people’s knowledge in favour of the knowledge of experts. Amit Basole has posited that in his defence of the small machine, Lohia was appealing not only to a dispersed production, but also to a dispersed knowledge base; this was not a mere defence of “traditional” knowledge but rather a call to seriously ponder on the richness of the knowledge distributed among the society beyond the domain of universities and their graduates.⁴¹² This defence of indigenous and popular knowledge was at the base of his distrust of Eurocentrism and his famous stance in defence of the use of Indian languages over English. In contemporary academic jargon, it could be said that Lohia was not only a precursor of postcolonial critiques of power and hegemony, but also of the debates on epistemic justice developed in recent decades over the need to grant equal validity and status to non-modern or peripheral knowledge. The new socialism Lohia pursued had not only to fundamentally rethink the foundations of Marxism, but also to challenge the supremacy given to western forms of knowledge in postcolonial countries. This was urgent in order to interrupt the hierarchical tradition of *deshmukh* leadership, the epistemological foundations of which were left untouched by JP and openly defended by Nehru.

In this sense, it could be argued that Lohia did not worry himself with the defence of a pure *lok niti* domain of action, but was rather concerned with the promotion of a popular knowledge that could challenge what Dipesh Chakrabarty has described as the pedagogical style of politics that prevailed in India during

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 268.

⁴¹² Basole, “The Technology Question in Lohia.”

the 1950s and early 1960s.⁴¹³ This was a crucial step in the process of bringing about true equality and establishing true socialism. Taking this into consideration it is possible to distinguish a fundamental distinction between the socialist outlooks of Lohia and JP. While the latter, as we argued in the previous chapter, focused on the importance of freedom from the alienating effects of power—both political and economic—Lohia’s project was based on a different principle: that of equality. It is to this discussion that we now turn.

5.2.2 Equality Vs. Freedom: Lohia’s views on caste and history and the impossibility of *lok niti*

In the previous section we saw how Jayaprakash stressed a necessary return to the villages as the core of a programme of regeneration of the spiritual community of India, which was aimed at the salvation of the country from the corrupting influence of the elitist and power-intoxicated representatives of the state. This reliance on the potential of popular institutions and popular power was at the root of his project of *lok niti* and entailed an acceptance of the hierarchies found within the collective, notably that of *varna*, which, he argued, was as “natural” as a “communion with neighbours”. In his words, the system of the four *varna* rested at the base of the “social genius of India” and provided its communities with a “theoretical as well as a practical form and basis.” JP was careful to distinguish this “functional or occupational community” from the system of caste functioning in postcolonial India, but nevertheless asserted the “undeniable” truth “(t)hat human beings ha(d) different aptitudes and abilities and every individual should be enabled to pursue and develop his natural gifts and inclinations”.⁴¹⁴ JP’s defence of *varna* was consistent with his ideal of *lok niti*, inasmuch as he conceived of the former as a “sign-post” of an original, “stable (and) democratic basis for (an) Indian polity” in which “the *dharma*, or social ethics, continued to function independently of the central State.” Further, he

⁴¹³ Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Legacies of Bandung: Decolonisation and the Politics of Culture,” *ibid.* 40, no. 46 (2005).

⁴¹⁴ *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, in Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 451.

assured that the social division of *varna* had provided the villages of India with a form of “democracy (...) so stable and efficient that it (had) continued well into the British period.”⁴¹⁵

In 1957, Jayaprakash had presented a broadly defined ideal of freedom—which included “freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind (and) freedom of the spirit”—as the leading “beacon” of his life and the driving force of his political activity.⁴¹⁶ The state, he argued, was the greatest obstacle for the attainment of this freedom; alienation could only be overcome through active political militancy, the defence of socialism—by then thought of as a programme for the creation of a *dharmic* human community—, and a strife to re-empower people in the face of power. Indeed, his project of *lok niti*, based on a rejection of the state paired by an active defence of revolutionary change as the ultimate goal of politics, was aimed at the attainment of freedom and creation of a non-alienating society. In this sense, JP shared a view common among anticolonial nationalists of the first three quarters of the twentieth century shaped by what the theorist David Scott has described as the modernist visionary horizon of a new beginning, marked by romantic narratives of freedom and emancipation from injustice.⁴¹⁷ Following Scott’s argument, JP’s uncritical acceptance of the social structures of the village fits perfectly with this narrative of romance, and is thus consistent with his lifelong emphasis on revolution. For this reason, JP’s project of *lok niti*, focused as it was on promoting a politics of protest based on the rejection of the vices of the state in favour of an intrinsically virtuous and potentially revolutionary multitude, could not but remain uncritical of the vices and shortcomings of the *lok* which it extolled and defended.

In contrast, instead of being fuelled by the pursuit of a revolution for freedom, the politics of Rammanohar Lohia during the years following 1947 hinged on the promotion of greater equality for the people of India. It has been pointed out that, unlike JP, Dr. Lohia did “not entertain any romantic idea of the

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 449.

⁴¹⁶ *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, Oct. 25 1957, Ibid., 227-9.

⁴¹⁷ Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity. The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*, 70.

Indian plebe.”⁴¹⁸ He was not only critical of the institutions of the state, but also, and more vehemently, of what Anand Kumar has termed the matrix of power in Indian society, shaped by the intersection of the hierarchical inequalities of caste, class, gender and language.⁴¹⁹ Lohia estimated that roughly 90% of the people of India were, in one way or another, victims of injustice as a result of the graded structure of inequality intrinsic to its society.⁴²⁰ As a result, he did not focus solely on denouncing the corruption and misused power of the higher spheres of politics, but also, and more vigorously, attacked the social elites of India, the members of which, he claimed, could be identified by sharing two of the three following features: high-caste, an English education, and material wealth.⁴²¹

The project of socialism defended by Lohia during the 1950s and 60s incorporated this intersectional approach to inequality and focused on the shortcomings of the society before the vices of the state. If JP’s project *lok niti* relied on building up the assumptions behind early XX century articulations of the national multitude, Lohia, in contrast, described traditional Indian society as “caste-ridden and as frightened of change as it (was) devoid of hope” and attacked it for being fundamentally un-revolutionary.⁴²² Instead of exalting the intrinsic qualities of the civilization of India as the base for a political practice of opposition, Lohia harshly denounced the ways in which the factual powers of “(r)eligion, politics, business and publicity” conspired together “to preserve the slime that (went) by the name of culture” in India.⁴²³ These views are close to those defended by JP up to the late 1940s, who described Indian society, “with its princes and nawabs, its landlords, its higher and lower castes and its untouchables”, as “wholly undemocratic both in spirit and in fact.”⁴²⁴ However,

⁴¹⁸ Christophe Jaffrelot, “The Rise of the Other Backward Classes in the Hindi Belt,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 1 (2000): 89.

⁴¹⁹ Anand Kumar, “Understanding Lohia’s Political Sociology: Intersectionality of Caste, Class, Gender and Language,” *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010).

⁴²⁰ Rammanohar Lohia, *The Caste System* (Hyderabad, India,: Navahind, 1964). Cited in Kumar, “Understanding Lohia’s Political Sociology: Intersectionality of Caste, Class, Gender and Language,” 65.

⁴²¹ Lohia, *Wheel of History*, 106.

⁴²² “Preface”, *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, xxv.

⁴²³ *The Caste System*, 9.

⁴²⁴ *The Transition to Socialism*, Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, 104.

during the 1950s, Jayaprakash would change his position radically to extoll the virtues of Indian civilization and village life as part of his project of *lok niti*. Consequently, Lohia would voice his intense opposition to JP's Gandhian vision of the village and the virtuous multitude, and would remain highly sceptical of the extolment of the *lok* as an alternative for the state.

In stark contrast to JP, Lohia described the people of India as "the saddest on earth", and spoke of a "black sadness"⁴²⁵ that prevailed over Indian society as the result of the despairing immobility of its structures of segregation, which were perfectly exemplified by caste. According to him, it was precisely the immovable character of caste that distinguished it from class. Caste, however, was not a purely Indian problem, but appeared as the result of a universal social dialectic inspired by the demand for, and resistance against, equality:

Class is mobile caste. Caste is immobile class. Every society or civilization has known this movement from class to caste and vice-versa. This movement is at the root of almost all internal happenings. It is almost always inspired by the demand for justice and equality.⁴²⁶

Indeed, the movement of history was determined by this constant oscillation between the rigidity of caste and the suppleness of class. "Class", Lohia asserted, "is the expression of the urge towards equality. Caste is the expression of the urge towards justice. (...) Man's fate swings between equality and justice, between vigour and stability and is cursed by the violence of the one and the decay of the other." Revealingly, although class was equated with equality, it was also associated with violence; conversely, caste was not only the mark of inequality, but also the guarantee of "orderly living" and "harmony".⁴²⁷

From this analysis of the dialectic of class and caste, it is possible to extract the contours of Lohia's non-teleological philosophy of history. This was opposed to the romantic historical narrative of revolution developed by JP during the 1940s and 50s, based on the conviction that "(t)he world (was) moving towards Socialism", and that "the message of Socialism (was) the message of

⁴²⁵ Lohia, *The Caste System*, 1-3.

⁴²⁶ *Wheel of History*, 28.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 42-3.

history”⁴²⁸, as well as to Nehru’s modernist account of history as the “slow but sure” progress of man “from barbarism to civilization.”⁴²⁹ Lohia conceived of history as constructed by cyclical movement, and thus inevitably marked by perpetual instability and flux: history was a wheel, as the title of his famous lectures given in Hyderabad in 1952 make clear. Lohia could see no evidence to hint at the possibility of an ascent or a linear progress in the movement of history; in his view, there was no final stage towards which it was heading. In this sense, he was not only in disagreement with those anticolonial nationalists that thought of history as the unfolding of the romantic narrative of the coming of revolution; he was also openly opposed to the dangers implicit in such views. In this respect, he warned:

Let not the hitherto arid dessert of history produce mirages or dream-like gardens that the mind’s eye can see out of seeds yet to be planted.⁴³⁰

In line with the CSP’s espousal of *swadeshi* contempt to parliamentary and formal politics, Lohia, like Jayaprakash, had been consistently opposed to the collaboration of the Congress with the institutions and procedures of the colonial state before 1947. A year before the transfer of power, both JP and Lohia rejected Nehru’s invitation to form part of the Congress Working Committee⁴³¹, and had been vocally opposed to the participation of the socialists in the Constituent Assembly. However, following JP’s retreat from the corrupting practice of *raj niti*, Lohia emerged as the main leader, ideologue and organizer of the Socialist Party in India, a position he retained until his death in 1967. During the first two decades of independent life in India, Lohia would use his intersectional attack on inequality as the motor of the programme of the different socialist parties he presided upon. Unlike Nehru, JP and most of the self-proclaimed socialists of independent India, Lohia did not hesitate to designate caste as the “most overwhelming factor in Indian life”, and to consistently

⁴²⁸ Jayaprakash Narayan, Presidential Address at the Second Convention of the Assam Socialist Party, Jorhat, 15 December 1947, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. IV (1946-1948), 200.

⁴²⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2003), 6.

⁴³⁰ Lohia, *Wheel of History*, 44.

⁴³¹ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 182.

chastise the upper castes for downgrading members of the lower castes to the point of congealing them “into an almost lifeless mass.”⁴³²

Lohia’s rise to prominence as the leader of party socialism coincided with a period of intense debate around the issue of caste-based reservations. Even before the appearance of the First Report of the Backward Classes Commission, written in 1953 and published in 1955, Lohia has advanced his interest in involving members of the lower castes in the ranks and leadership of the Socialist Party⁴³³, and had begun his active campaign for the application of preferential opportunities for the backward sections of society.⁴³⁴ In a hardly veiled criticism of the self-proclaimed socialism of the Nehruvian state, Lohia had asserted:

Socialism is a doctrine of equality. Unless we are careful, it may deteriorate into a doctrine of inequality. If merit were to be the sole criterion for election or appointments, the high castes with their 5,000 years old traditions of specialization in mental pursuits would be unbeatable. They would continue to be at the top in a socialist society as they have been in previous societies. (...) The *Dvija* must be prepared to endure a temporary injustice so that the wrongs of several thousand years may be righted and a new era of justice and equality may begin. The proudest day of the *Brahmin* and the *Bania* would be when they end their supremacy.⁴³⁵

Lohia would deploy further attacks on Nehru by calling him a “pseudo-European” and accusing him of being “viciously caste-ridden, perhaps unknowingly.” Following 1958, Lohia proposed that at least 60 per cent of the “nation’s top leadership” be selected from among the lower castes.⁴³⁶ During the second half of the 1950s, Lohia would make significant efforts to contact the leaders of the most important anti-caste movements, as well as major leaders of the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. Between 1955 and 1956, he would maintain a correspondence with B. R. Ambedkar, inviting him to attend the 1955 Conference of the Socialist Party, and, in 1957, the Lohia-led SP would

⁴³² Rammanohar Lohia, “Caste”, July 1958, in Rammanohar Lohia, “August Revolution: Twentyfifth Anniversary,” *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (2011): 28-9.

⁴³³ “Letter to a Sudra”, March 1953, in *The Caste System*.

⁴³⁴ For a study of the defence of caste-based reservations effected by Lohia and other socialists during the 1950s, see Christophe Jaffrelot, *India’s Silent Revolution : The Rise of the Lower Castes* (London: C. Hurst, 2003), 256-71.

⁴³⁵ “Endure Temporary Injustice”, May 1956, Lohia, *The Caste System*, 26.

⁴³⁶ “Towards the Destruction of Caste and Classes”, June 1958, *ibid.*, 96-8.

merge with the Indian National Backward Classes Federation. Moreover, Lohia extended Ambedkar's demands and advocated for extending the scope of the Backward Classes label to include other sections of the population, notably depressed Muslims, Adivasis and women.⁴³⁷

Equality was not, like freedom, a goal to be attained through the militant belief on a romantic and teleological narrative of vindication and liberation. Rather, it could only emerge as the result of a never-ending process that had to be constructed gradually through the revolutionary effect of the action of the state upon an un-revolutionary and intrinsically unjust social order. In this sense, Lohia's position, in as much as he denounced the conservative and hierarchical core of the *lok* or people of India, can be seen to be diametrically opposed to JP's anti-statism. From an analysis of Lohia's intersectional approach to social inequality and his defence of tackling caste as the fundamental fact of socio-political life in India, it becomes clear that his rejection of JP's immersion in *sarvodaya* and *lok niti* was not borne from ideological differences or personal disagreement; by stressing the intrinsically un-revolutionary nature of society in India and promoting a programme of political change based on the radical demand for equality, Lohia was in fact, making a case for the impossibility of a multitude as the basis for political action and, as a result, for the hopelessness of the project of *lok niti*.

5.3 The Rout of the Socialists

5.3.1 Differences over revolution

In the previous chapter I presented the argument that at the core of JP and Nehru's estrangement during the decades following independence laid a fundamentally different conception of the nature of political action. The conflict arising from their contrasting approaches, I posited, can be seen as the essence of the opposition between the logics of *raj* and *lok niti*. Their gradual separation,

⁴³⁷ "Towards the Destruction of Caste and Classes", June 1958 and "Association for the Study and Destruction of Caste", May 1960, in *ibid*.

however, can also be framed as the result of their disagreement over the relation of socialism to the notion of revolution, a discussion that would also cause both of them to drift away ideologically and politically from Rammanohar Lohia. All three, as we have seen, identified socialism with the possibility of a radical transformation of society and, through it, the coming of a new civilization. As a result of their differing conceptions of revolution, however, the shape and possible outcomes of this transformation were imagined in entirely different ways by each of them.

For Nehru, the goal of socialism was to be subjected to the broader project of modernisation and was thus to be comparable to other “national goals” such as industrialisation, parliamentary democracy, secularism and non-alignment.⁴³⁸ Very much in the spirit that animated the project of socioeconomic development of the Third World—captured in the title of Julius Nyerere’s biography *We Must Run While They Walk*—the revolution of socialism was coded by Nehru in the language of state-led economic growth, industrialisation and accelerated national progress. In this view, socialism should aim at bringing India up to speed with the industrialised world and overcoming the evils of poverty and sluggish economic development. On the other hand, albeit in different ways, for JP and Lohia socialism designated a fundamental moral principle and presented the only revolutionary programme capable of overcoming the alienation caused by modern civilization and the injustices of Indian society. Likewise, for both of them, socialism in India should entail the overcoming of the vices, shortcomings and injustices implanted by Western civilization.

Up until 1952, JP’s attempts to approach Nehru, as well as his relation with Lohia, were framed by the logic of party politics. Likewise, until that moment JP thought of revolution as the extension and fulfilment of the *swadeshi* project of independence, autonomy and self-reliance, which, he proposed, should be pursued through the promotion of direct action and mass organization. However, following his rejection of *raj niti*, his disagreement with both Nehru and Lohia

⁴³⁸ For a comment on the Nehruvian notion of “national goals”, see Bhikhu Parekh, “Nehru and the National Philosophy of India,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 26, no. 1/2 (1991).

regarding revolution—a notion that would become increasingly central for JP in the years leading to the climatic agitation of 1973-1975—would stem from his increasing conviction of the importance of equating socialism with *Sarvodaya*, a growing rejection of materialism and the state, and his focus on the moral transformation of the individual and the community. As we saw in the last chapter, throughout the 1950s the limitation of wants and the ideal of *Sarvodaya* emerged as JP's central propositions for the development of a true socialist revolution.

It is clear that the ideal of *Sarvodaya* represented a rejection of Western models of social transformation, a tendency both JP and Lohia shared. However, while JP's critique of the West ran in parallel to an extolment of the virtues of a construction of the people—or *lok*—of India, for Lohia the questioning of imported models did not imply an automatic celebration of the society of India. Rather, he was thinking in terms of promoting a radical programme of equality through a renovation of the meaning and praxis of socialism in light of the needs and specific characteristics of society in India.

By the early 1950s, Lohia was clearly disenchanted with the way socialism was being thought of and applied around the world. In a famous address given at the Convention of the Socialist Party in May 1952, he declared that unless socialism was “able to disintegrate the premises on which capitalism and communism are founded and arrange instead its own harmony of economic and general aims, it will continue to be an illogical doctrine that refuses to come of age.”⁴³⁹ The great convulsions of the 1940s, he assured, had not resulted in the triumph of a revolutionary change towards greater equality: “No spectre (was) hunting the world or any part of it.” In the case of India, Lohia blamed the conservatism of the elites for blocking the success of the “revolution” of 1947, and claimed that a similar situation was taking place in other countries. “Arrested

⁴³⁹ Presidential Address at the Pachmarhi Convention of the Socialist Party, 23 May 1952, in “Report of the Special Convention Held at Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh, 23rd to 27th May 1952,” Socialist Party (India)(Bombay), 1952, 137.

revolution”, he assured, “had been the mark almost everywhere of new-born freedom.”⁴⁴⁰

In accordance with his intersectional approach to social inequality in India, Lohia developed a project of transformation based on what he termed the seven revolutions—*saat krantiyan*. In Lohia’s formulation, these included the fight against the four kinds of inequality predominant in India—namely, and in that order, those of gender, caste, class and race—, the fight against the inequality between nations, the revolution against the infringement of the individual by the collective, and the promotion of a revolutionary practice based on civil disobedience.⁴⁴¹ This was a political programme that aspired to create a form of socialism that stemmed from the specific social needs and cultural uniqueness of India. In a fundamental sense, the seven revolutions ran in opposition to the celebration of Indian society implicit in *Sarvodaya* as well as to the disregard of the differences between India and the West promoted by Nehruvian progressivism. At the same time, Lohia’s programme was aimed at effecting specific changes in definite spheres of the society, rather than advocating an overarching, general principle—whether modernisation or the transformation of the self—as the motor for revolution.

Despite being fashioned to attend to the specific needs and problems of India, Lohia’s programme of revolution towards equality intended to be global in scope. Contrary to the orthodox Marxian view, however, Lohia asserted that a true world revolution could only be born in the poor parts of the world. Revolution could not be ignited in Euro-America, where, he assured, revolutionary desire had been hindered by the material abundance generated by the pillaging of the rest of the world.⁴⁴² In the case of independent India, revolution could only be brought about by the restatement and renovation of socialism, a doctrine that should go beyond a mere emphasis on economic development—as in the case of Nehru—and the promotion of a politics of protest based on the prospect of moral transformation in the face of corrupt power—as advocated by JP—to focus

⁴⁴⁰ Lohia, “Revolution Arrested,” 51.

⁴⁴¹ *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, xxx-xxxx.

⁴⁴² “Revolution Arrested.”

on the upsetting and transformation of an unjust cultural setting from its very foundations. For this purpose, the role of the state was central. In Lohia's analysis, India had long been characterised by an absence of statehood: "(w)ithout the state", he argued, "India had been producing not men but mice and the humanity of the tallest of them was almost over an abstract cover for stinking individualism, either submissive or greedy." The people of India needed a strong, caring state that could nurture a more equal and just social order. This, in turn, would invigorate and fortify the society.⁴⁴³ All initiatives to promote social transformation from outside the state were doomed to failure, and all insistence on renouncing "human desire" as the basis for social revolution, like the one promoted by *Bhoodan*, were more likely to create "a situation of civil war within the human breast"⁴⁴⁴ than to effect significant change. Despite not having referred explicitly to Jayaprakash in his criticism of Vinoba's movement, Lohia makes clear his complete opposition to JP's views on the state when he states that "(u)nless Mr. Bhave's movements were massively financed by the rich and even supported legislatively by the State, both of whom are continually acting against the doctrine of freedom from gold, no matter what their professions may be, these movements would either dry up or, if they lived, they would acquire a totally different character."⁴⁴⁵ Bhave's doctrine had, in Lohia's view, "hardly any validity for the world as it is"⁴⁴⁶ and thus represented an obstacle for the real success of revolution.

It is clear that Lohia and Nehru were in accord with regards to the importance of the state in the promotion of socialist revolution. Both conceived of the national state as the product of the triumph of anticolonial nationalism, and as the main tool for the transformation of society. Nevertheless, their projects of socioeconomic development could not have been more at odds with each other. Nehru's conviction that modernisation through industrialisation would lead India out of material poverty and put an end to unjust social structures was harshly

⁴⁴³ *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, xxxxi-xxxixii.

⁴⁴⁴ Materiality and Spirituality (Speech at Banaras, 1953), *ibid.*, 199.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 202.

criticised by Lohia, who actively advocated for caste reservations and the promotion the revolutionary technology of the small machine. In Lohia's view, revolution should be thought of as the result of the merger between the possibilities of industry and the insistence on decency and simplicity. In his words, "the desire to live simply (was) the woof and modern technology the warp"⁴⁴⁷ of the open doctrine of socialism that India needed. These ideological and conceptual differences between them would crystallise in the final and irremediable estrangement of the three most important socialists of early independent India.

5.3.2 Lok Niti and the return of dharma: Redefining Indian Polity away from the socialists

In the years immediately following the transfer of power, Jayaprakash had repeatedly warned Nehru of the dangers of unlinking a policy of socialism from a truly revolutionary programme of social transformation merely for the sake of party power or political gain. "Democracy and socialism", he lamented in a letter to the new Prime Minister sent towards the end of 1948, "are mere words that the Congress bandies about with no faith in either and with the open cynicism of all those who rape the masses."⁴⁴⁸ Further ahead in the same letter, JP appealed to Nehru to rely more on the help of the Socialist Party in the transformation of independent India instead of vesting his trust in the corrupt and immoral high command of the Congress. A few months earlier, in August 1948, Nehru had lamented the gap growing between the Congress government and the Socialist Party, and had expressed to JP his fears that without the help of the socialists, the state would find it very difficult to face the critical times ahead.⁴⁴⁹

However, even if until the late 1940s the socialists had appeared to Nehru as an important force in Indian politics, the influence and political weight of the

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., xv.

⁴⁴⁸ Jayaprakash Narayan, letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 10 December 1948, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. V (1948-1950), 112.

⁴⁴⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, letter to Jayaprakash Narayan, August 19, 1948, in Kapoor, *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, 206-07.

SP diminished considerably during the following years. Ever since the disappointing results of the 1952 general elections, the cadres and leaders of the Socialist Party had, in the words of Madhu Limaye, neglected the necessary chores of “ceaseless contact, (...) mass work and systematic organization (that) would have enabled the party to win over the silent majority and activate its interest.”⁴⁵⁰

As a result of the widespread frustration that spread among socialist leaders after the elections, some among the ranks of the socialists placed the blame of the disappointing results on JP’s wavering leadership.⁴⁵¹ Moreover, following JP’s open praise of Vinoba’s *Bhoodan* movement at the Pachmarhi session of the SP, celebrated between the 23 and 27 May 1952, many salient socialist leaders began expressing their concern for what began to be seen as his harmful political and ideological eccentricities. Later that year, Asoka Mehta mentioned in a letter to Lohia his perception that “the umbilical cord that linked (JP) to Marxism (was) snapping”⁴⁵², while the respected Acharya Narendra Deva expressed his fear that JP was increasingly drifting away from politics into the realm of mysticism and spiritualism.⁴⁵³ JP’s life-changing fast, effected in the summer of that year, contributed to growing speculation and concern among his old socialist comrades. For his part, by the end of that year, Lohia was beginning to give clear signs of being exasperated by JP’s newly adopted stance in favour of *sarvodaya*. This only worsened when a letter sent by JP to Nehru in March 1952, in which the former presented the latter with a 14-point plan for the transformation of India along socialist lines⁴⁵⁴, was interpreted by members of the PSP as part of an attempt to court the favour of the Prime Minister and the Congress Party.

⁴⁵⁰ Limaye, *Galaxy of the Indian Socialist Leaders*, 59.

⁴⁵¹ Bhattacharjea, *Jayaprakash Narayan : A Political Biography*, 108.

⁴⁵² Asoka Mehta, letter to Rammanohar Lohia, 6 September 1952, in Kapoor, *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, 180.

⁴⁵³ Narendra Deva, letter to Asoka Mehta, 10 September 1952, in *ibid.*, 188-89.

⁴⁵⁴ Jayaprakash Narayan, letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 4 March 1953, in Madhu Dandavate and Jayaprakash Narayan, eds., *Jayaprakash Narayan : Struggle with Values. A Centenary Tribute* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2002), 118-24.

Despite the rift that had opened between JP and some sectors of the socialists during these years, his gradual renunciation of responsibility inside the party triggered fears among many of its members who still considered JP to be the “main leader of socialism” in India and the “principal architect of the party.”⁴⁵⁵ Even Lohia, who had given ample signs of his dismissal of JP’s drift towards *sarvodaya*, anxiously wrote to JP on March 1954 asserting that “you alone can be the nation’s leader and can further the cause of socialism.”⁴⁵⁶ In an address to the Bombay Party workers of the party delivered on the 15th of May, 1954, JP explained more amply his decision to quit the field of institutional politics in an effort to clear the air regarding the suspicion of a disagreement between him and other members of the party, notably Lohia. In this address, he reassured his faith in the socialist project of creating a “classless, stateless and party less society”, and affirmed his belief in the “utility of the state and political parties.” However, he went on to express his rejection of the tendency of parties to “perpetuate themselves beyond their real utility (and) to create new vested interests”. In accordance with his conviction of devoting his energies to constructive work and *lok niti*, he declared that the effort for the creation of a stateless and classless society had to be taken over by “people who are ready to withdraw from electioneering and the like.” He further expressed his willingness to remain open to collaborating and giving advice to members of the party in the future, but rejected any institutional responsibility.⁴⁵⁷

The process of parting between JP and the socialists came to a head in April 1954, when the former made the solemn pledge of *jeevandan*—or gift of life—to the cause of *Bhoodan* at the sixth annual *Sarvodaya* Conference at Bodh Gaya. The announcement had a powerful effect given that it was made in front of important political figures, notably Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalani, who were present at the Conference. Finally, on June 15 of that year, JP formally resigned from the national executive of the PSP. From that moment

⁴⁵⁵ Madhu Limaye, letter to Jayaprakash Narayan, 11 May 1954, in Kapoor, *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, 249-50.

⁴⁵⁶ Rammanohar Lohia, letter to Jayaprakash Narayan, 30 March 1954, in *ibid.*, 252.

⁴⁵⁷ Report of JP’s speech on 22 April 1954, in *ibid.*, 253-56.

onwards, and despite the exhortations of many of his colleagues, he would drift farther and farther away from *raj niti*. His seemingly definitive move away from party politics and devotion to *lok niti* came in 1957, when he gave up even his basic membership of the party.

In the previous chapter we argued that after his pledge of *jeevandan*, JP would defend and promote the political culture of *lok niti*, based on an anti-statist conception of *swaraj* as autonomy and an approach to democracy shaped by a belief in direct political action, the voluntarism of the individual and the mobilization of the masses. Further, it was posited that from the perspective of *lok niti* JP conceived of politics as a practice that appeared as the very fabric of social life and involved every individual and collective action. In the years that followed his resignation from the socialist ranks, JP would extend his rejection of the workings of political parties and states institutions to include a direct questioning of the system of constitutional democracy as a whole. This chapter will be concluded with an assessment of one of his most famous texts, *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity* (1959). This text is relevant not only because it sums up JP's ruminations developed during the 1950s regarding the impact of Western socio-political models in India, the existence of an authentically Indian polity, and the incapacity of power politics to address the problems of India, but also because in it we find the first signs of what would be branded as Total Revolution during the first half of the 1970s. Originally meant to be circulated privately among some of his close acquaintances like Nehru, Kripalani, Morarji Desai, Rajendra Prasad and Indira Gandhi, *A Plea for the Reconstruction of Indian Polity* was also JP's last attempt to influence the ambit of *raj niti* before his comeback as leader of the Bihar movement of 1973. Finally, the text coincides with JP's definitive estrangement from his old socialist comrades and makes clear his attempt to carry on with the project of socialism even at a distance from them.

In *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, JP denounced the Western model of democracy as a product of the harmful and power-centric logic of *raj niti*, and decry its implantation in India. Western democracy, he argued, was

based on the atomisation of society and the inorganic sum of individuals through the bureaucratic workings of the State.⁴⁵⁸ In compliance to such a model, all countries deemed democratic—including the followers of Non-Alignment—functioned not as true democracies but as systems of elected oligarchy in which the unlimited pursuit of material satisfaction gradually eliminated the possibility of true self-rule.⁴⁵⁹ The centralization of wealth and power fostered by parliamentary democracy eroded the basis of any true community and contributed to the crushing of man under the weight of the alienation generated by the modern evils of urbanization and industrialization. Democracy, for JP, appears as a moral problem, and as a threat to the fabric of the community:

*The problem of present-day civilization is social integration. Man is alone and bored; he is 'organization man', he is man ordered about and manipulated by forces beyond his ken (...). The problem is to put man in touch with man, so that they may live together in meaningful, understandable, controllable relationships. In short, the problem is to re-create the human community.*⁴⁶⁰

The antidote to the destruction of community and the hope for “saving man from alienation from himself and (from) the fate of robotism (sic.)” laid on the promotion of a polity modelled on a more “human scale” and of the self-government of local communities.⁴⁶¹

Up until this point, *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity* appears as a coherent synthesis of the main ideals defended by JP ever since his retreat away from materialism in the late 1940s. Namely, the insistence of thinking about socialism as the result of a moral transformation, the urgent conviction of the need to oppose the workings of the state as well as turning towards the village community as a way of countering the alienation brought about by modern industrial civilization. However, this text is all the more relevant inasmuch as it gives us an account of what JP saw as the historical origins and evolution of *lok niti*, and a discussion of the ways in which it had remained alive in the villages of India since ancient times. According to JP, there existed an uninterrupted

⁴⁵⁸ *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, in Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, vol. VII (1954-1960), 435.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 440-46.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 465. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 488-90.

continuity of the society and culture of India since ancient times that had allowed the survival of an ancient form of Indian polity, which was more consistent with “the social nature of man and the scientific organisation of society” than the “present Western polity” espoused by the leaders of the independent Indian state. Such a polity rested on the spiritual unity and survival of an Indian way of life through the ages, as well as on the permanence of a set of “grass-roots democratic institutions” like village councils, town committees and trade and artisans guilds.”⁴⁶² These institutions, as well as the *varna* system, had functioned independently of the central state and in obeisance of *dharma* and thus provided a truly democratic basis for society in India.⁴⁶³ Nevertheless, this Indian polity had been weakened by the establishment of hereditary kingship in ancient times, the violence of British colonialism and the recent adoption of Western models of democracy. The only way of overcoming the moral decay and political corruption this process had generated was to engage in the recuperation of *dharma* “as a system of culture and discipline rather than a creed.”⁴⁶⁴

We have seen that during the 1930s and 40s JP would consistently refer to the opening decades of the XX century as the moment of origin of the only valid tradition of protest and politics in India, and that his conviction that political action had to be codified through the logic of protest against the abuses and vices of *raj niti* took definite shape during the 1950s. By the end of the Nehruvian years, JP was clearly struggling to broaden the range of *lok niti*, and to rescue the practice of politics from the universalizing claims of the West and redirect it in such a way so that the alienation of individuals and the destruction of communities that had been central to the battle-cry of socialists and Gandhians in India since the beginning of the XX century could be effectively countered through the revival of seemingly indigenous moulds of life and truly democratic forms of social organisation.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 435-47.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 449.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 453.

5.4 Conclusions

In the nearly two decades between the transfer of power (1947) and the death of Nehru (1964), the Nehruvian model of state-led socio-political development came under attack from numerous fronts. In this chapter we have dealt at length with the anti-Congressism of Rammanohar Lohia and complemented our analysis of Jayaprakash Narayan's defence of *lok niti* and critique of the modernizing programme of the emergent national state in India. What made the critiques of JP and Lohia stand out was that they were not merely opposing Nehru's way of leading the new national state but also, and more fundamentally, contending over the meaning and scope of socialism and struggling to retain it as an integral part of differing programmes of protest and opposition.

In spite of the opposition presented by JP and Lohia during the 1950s, the Nehruvian brand of socialism—constructed around a programme of state-led industrial and urban modernization along Western lines—would emerge as the basic roadmap for socio-economic policies in India during the 1960s and 70s. Following the death of Nehru, Indira Gandhi would carry on with the defence of this paternalist socialism, and indeed use it as a central part of her government's "populist repertoire." Indeed, by the mid 1970s the currency of socialism among the society and the leaders of India was such that Indira Gandhi would consistently try to justify the declaration of Emergency by calling upon the socialist mission of the Congress Party.⁴⁶⁵

The main objective of this chapter has been to stress the point that, despite the hegemony of the Nehruvian position of socioeconomic transformation well into the 1980s, socialism was also brandished as a programme of protest and opposition during the 1950s and early 1960s. The two main defenders of socialism as a programme of protest against the entrenchment of conservative power during these years were Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia. Both figures, united in life by friendship and common leftist leanings, are currently

⁴⁶⁵ Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution : The Rise of the Lower Castes*, 115-44.

united again by their apparent absence from the horizon of Indian politics as well as academic and political commentary. This fact should be seen as the result of their status as symbols of protest and their ceaseless promotion of opposition. In their heterodox interpretations of socialism both presented important challenges to what Yogendra Yadav has referred to as the two most powerful orientations in the institutionalized world of ideas in post-independent India, one defined by its allegiance to the Nehruvian project, the other to Marxism.⁴⁶⁶ As a result of the encumbrance these stands represent to both orientations, a silence has been imposed around them. Political opinion has not forgiven Lohia for his “three sins”, namely his open attack on the figure of Nehru, his vigorous campaign against English and his open denunciation of high-caste dominance in Indian politics.⁴⁶⁷ For his part, the legacy of JP’s practice and ideas equally downplayed and abased as a result of a widespread perception of him as an inconstant and offbeat political thinker.⁴⁶⁸ Despite having been central players in the origin and evolution of important political cultures of protest and opposition during the XX century in India, only rare figures and regional political parties have pledged their allegiance to either JP or Lohia in recent decades.⁴⁶⁹

Lohia’s thought, as we have seen, was characterized by its audacity and novelty. During the 1950s, he developed a coherent and original critique of Marxism, euro centrism and the role of the periphery in the crisis of capitalism. In

⁴⁶⁶ Yogendra Yadav, "On Remembering Lohia," *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010): 46.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ See, for example, Manish K. Thakir, "Jp and the Limits of 'Lokniti'," *ibid.* 43, no. 44 (2008); Yogendra Yadav, "Jp's Changing Ideas on Social Change," in *Jp and Social Change*, ed. Nageshwar Prasad (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1992); Bipan Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003); David Selbourne, *In Theory and in Practice. Essays on the Politics of Jayaprakash Narayan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁴⁶⁹ One notable example is V.P. Singh, who on the day he was sworn in as Prime Minister, on 3 December 1989, mentioned Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan as his mentors. Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution : The Rise of the Lower Castes*, 335-36. Currently, Lohia is hailed as an important precursor by the Samajwadi Party (see <http://www.samajwadiparty.in/ourleader-ramlohia.html>, accessed 2 February 2015), while JP figures in the list of influences credited by Laloo Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (<http://rjd.co.in/ideology.html>, accessed 2 February 2015). They both stand together as important precursors to Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) (<http://www.janataadalunited.org/>, accessed 2 February 2015).

contrast, JP was deeply invested in the promotion of nativist projections of the ideal of village life and an extolment of the society of India during these years. While Lohia defined socialism as an open-ended project based on the continuous challenging of cultural, symbolic and social forms of domination⁴⁷⁰, JP would defend a vision of socialism as the result of a moral transformation as the way of opposing the alienating effects of modern civilization and the institutions of Western democratic governance.

Both were equally radical in their anti-official stances and their enthusiasm for protest. Following his death in 1967, Lohia left behind his programme of seven revolutions as a roadmap for the establishment of equality and socialism. However, as has been anticipated, his programme would have a very limited impact in the years following his death. Paradoxically, JP's detachment from *rajniti*, along with his undefined and romantic views on social transformation, would allow for him to play a political role of great consequence and impact during the turbulent 1970s. As a result of his life-long encouragement of protest he would emerge after more than a decade devoted to the constructive programme of *Bhoodan* as the leader of the most formidable front of opposition the Indian state had been faced with so far.

⁴⁷⁰ Rajaram Tolpadi, "Context, Discourse and Vision of Lohia's Socialism," *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010).

6. The Old JP and the New India: the last stance of the *Lok Nayak* (1974-1979)

Anyone who wants to rule Delhi, should go to her not as wooer but as her subduer.
Rammanohar Lohia, 1958⁴⁷¹

In this chapter I will argue that the first half of the 1970s and the Emergency years brought with them both the peak of the Nehruvian statist culture of *raj niti* and the culmination of JP's promotion of *lok niti* protest. The thrust for centralisation of the Nehruvian model—which, as we have seen, was among the aspects of *raj niti* most eagerly criticised by JP—was intensified during the first years of Indira's government, and brought to a peak during the Emergency (1975-1977), a period during which government decisions were, in the words of Arvind Rajagopal, "shifted beyond the reach of normal mechanisms open to legislative discussion, official procedure or public lobbying, and instead shrouded in executive privilege under the claim of the extraordinary circumstance of a threat to national security."⁴⁷² At the same time, these years witnessed a marked increase of movements of protest against the perceived unfairness and arbitrariness of the workings of the state. Of particular importance, both for JP's political life and for bringing about the conditions that favoured the declaration of the Emergency, were the tactics, demands and effects of the students' movements in Gujarat and Bihar. As we will see in this chapter, these movements were seen by JP as an opportunity to re-enact the revolutionary thrust of Non-Cooperation and, by virtue of this re-enactment, of reviving the true emancipatory essence of Indian national politics.

Through his impact as the most important leader of the protest movement that ensued, JP would contribute in crucial ways to the first electoral defeat of the Congress, the creation of a broad, national bloc of opposition, and the creation of an important space for the development of non-statist political action and protest

⁴⁷¹ "Dilli, also Called Delhi", September 1958, in Mastram Kapoor, ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, vol. 5 (Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011), 265.

⁴⁷² Arvind Rajagopal, "The Emergency as Prehistory of the New Indian Middle Class," *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 5 (2011): 1013.

in which some of the most important forces that were to shape Indian politics after the 1970s found a place to thrive. In this sense, the old JP can be seen not only as a champion of old leftist and Gandhian causes, but also as an important actor in the emergence of the ensemble of forces rallied around the ideology of Hindu nationalism as well as social movements of protest in India.

Seen in the frame of JP's life, the opening years of the 1970s can be seen as a period of experiential zenith regarding his lifelong devotion to protest and his commitment to the political represented in the culture of *lok niti*. For this reason, this chapter will devote equal attention to the events of his life and to the development of his thought and action during these years, as, I will argue, they cannot be looked at separately.

In the first section of this chapter, JP's views on the situation of the country in the early 1970s will be fleshed out. I will argue that his final comeback to the arena of national politics in 1974 was the result of his perception that the action of the government during the 1950s and 60s had propitiated the betrayal of the glorious legacy of 1921 and the radical thrust of early XX century nationalism. Moreover, his leadership of the student movement in Bihar was fuelled by his conviction that the movement represented the last chance for the culmination of the only authentic tradition of politics in India, and as the possibility of countering the action of the state in favour of the recreation of the community. In the second section I will analyse JP's role in the formation and eventual victory of the Janata Front, and discuss the content and goals of his programme of Total Revolution. I will develop the argument that the former marked the culmination of his life-long defence of antipolitical rhetoric and techniques as well as of a populist logic of political action. Moreover, it will be shown that Total Revolution, despite being remembered as JP's most famous slogan, brought nothing new to his repertoire of protest; instead, it presented a mix of all the ideals, goals and claims he had defended since the 1930s, repackaged for the sake of adding one final twist to his vision of *lok niti*, the form and implications of which will be discussed in the third section. The fourth section deals with the ways in which JP drifted towards the orbit of the RSS in the last years of his life, the ways in which

the JP movement contributed to the consolidation of the ensemble of Hindu right forces that would become central to Indian politics after the 1980s, as well as JP's final disillusionment with the possibilities of protest.

6.1 Reviving the virtuous tradition of 1921

In chapter 3, we saw how, during the 1950s, JP harshly criticised Nehru for his role in the establishment of the corrupting and alienating political culture of *raj niti* at the core of the practice and organization of the national state in India. In JP's view, this entailed relinquishing the radical and emancipatory thrust of early XX century nationalist politics, as well as the revolutionary legacy of Gandhi. In subsection 6.1.1 I will show that, by the late 1960s, JP confirmed that the process that had begun with Nehru had been completely taken over by the elites and higher echelons of power in India. In his eyes, this meant the betrayal of the ideals of *swaraj* upheld during the freedom movement and the failure of the state in independent India. In the following sub section I will argue that his full-fledged support for the student movement that took form towards the end of 1973 was motivated by his belief that the movement had the potential of carrying on with the struggle of 1921, which, as I argued in chapters 2 and 4, he conceived of as the only valid tradition of politics in India, the origin of his devotion to *lok niti*, and the beginning of his career as an activist, leader and revolutionary. In this sense, the early 1970s marked the culmination of JP's life of protest as well as of his devotion to the radical emancipatory thrust of early XX century Indian nationalism.

6.1.1 The First Decades of Independence and the Betrayal of the Ideal of *Swaraj*

In accordance with his promise of *jeevandan*—or gift of life—extended in 1954, Jayaprakash spent most of the following decade and a half devoted to the promotion of voluntary work and *Bhoodan*. However, despite his efforts and the initial successes of the movement, the 1960s saw the clear decline of *Bhoodan*.

After the fading away of its initial appeal, numerous problems arose regarding the transfer of land: many donors changed their mind—sometimes violently—, entire plots were found to be of poor quality, legal requirements were not taken care of, and large numbers of voluntary workers gradually abandoned the cause making it impossible for the movement to reach its target of obtaining 50 million acres.⁴⁷³ In 1969, after more than fifteen years devoted to its cause, JP publicly renounced *Bhoodan*, alleging that, although it presented a definite improvement over state initiatives regarding the problem of landlessness in India, the movement was incapable of providing any solutions. He asserted in a disenchanted tone that the land problem in India was, like the population of the country, “too vast” and “nobody (could) solve it”.⁴⁷⁴

His devotion to constructive voluntary work did not prevent JP from being involved in political affairs of national importance and commenting upon changes in the international scene during the decades following the transfer of power. He raised his voice against the soviet aggression against Hungary in 1956 and the march of Indian troops—headed by Nehru—into Goa in 1961. As an organizer, he put together an international conference on Tibet in Delhi in 1960, an India-Pakistan reconciliation group in 1962 and headed a peace mission to Nagaland in 1964. Later on, in the years immediately prior to his return to the centre stage of national politics as leader of the Bihar movement, he would act as a mediator between the famous dacoits of Chambalghati and the state, contributing to the former’s voluntary surrender and the promotion of a pact with the government. During the years that preceded the turbulent period of 1974-75, JP consistently adhered to his programme of *lok niti* and continuously promoted his adherence to opposition and protest, whether in the face of the Indian state, the abuses of Stalinism or the imposition of the Chinese government.

During the later part of the 1960s, JP would increasingly attack the leaders and institutions of the state in India of betraying the ideal of *swaraj* that had taken

⁴⁷³ Ajit Bhattacharjea, *Unfinished Revolution. A Political Biography of Jayaprakash Narayan* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2004), 128-29.

⁴⁷⁴ “Need for a Non-violent Revolution on India’s Political Agenda, address given to the National conference of Voluntary Agencies, New Delhi, 8 June 1969, J.P. Papers, NMML.

shape during the beginning of the century. In his view, the same figures that had embraced “non-violence as a matter of expediency (...) to fight the British Empire” had turned away from the teachings of Gandhi and the emancipatory thrust of early XX century radical nationalism to embrace the alienating violence of *raj niti* once political independence had been gained. He painted a grim picture of what he saw as the result of this triumph of *raj niti* in independent India:

What do we find after twenty-two years of independence? Human beings by the million are living as pigs. In the great cities of Calcutta and Bombay people literally pick up food from the gutter. Law and order has to be maintained so that these people do not break a few shop windows and seize the food displayed there. This is not the conception of a non-violent order of society. (...) Let us go to the people. It is not by sitting in Parliament here and by legislating there that you will create a new India. The new India will have to be created by the bare hands of the people.⁴⁷⁵

He would especially bemoan the abandonment of the ideals of autonomy, self-sufficiency, voluntarism and self-sacrifice, which had been central to early XX Century radical nationalism, and which remained the corner stone of *lok niti*. Likewise, during this time his defence of *dharma* as the basis for true democracy and socialism became more entrenched.⁴⁷⁶ For Jayaprakash, the answer laid in the defence of Gandhi’s revolutionary programme and ideal of *sarvodaya*. However, the great misfortune of independent India was that “(t)hose who were left after (Gandhi) could think of no other instrument of national service than political power.” As a result of this, politics in India had been turned into a mere “race for power and position” that had entirely “degraded public life.”⁴⁷⁷

The only hope for overcoming this process of disenchantment laid in the voluntarism of the masses and the action of “ordinary citizens”.⁴⁷⁸ However, even the initiative of the people was being stifled under the weight of the alienating culture of *raj niti* as a result of the generalization of a “slave mentality” that was

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ On this regard see, especially his lectures delivered over the award of the Prize Fund given by the Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Prize Fund, titled “Three Basic Problems of Free India”, 21-23 August 1964, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VIII (1960-1966), 438-63. And his Presidential Address at the All India Panchayat Parishad, titled “Panchayati Raj and Democracy”, New Delhi, 18 May 1966, in *ibid.*, 35-38.

⁴⁷⁷ Address at Delhi University, 23 December 1966, JP papers NMML.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

spreading from the upper and middle classes to the rest of the country. In JP's view, the middle classes in India, a group in which he included himself, suffered from a "slave mentality" inasmuch as they were "a creation of slavery" and foreign education:

Many people think that Macaulay did a great service to India by giving us this educational system. I do not think so. I think nobody did more disservice to India by just one single act. This education cut us completely off (sic.) from the roots of our civilization, from the roots of our life, from the roots of our history and made us all absolutely rootless, hanging by the coat tail of foreign power (sic.). Hardly any educated Indian today thinks that it is possible to do anything by ourselves. He believes that whatever is possible to be done can be done only by the government. This I call slave mentality. It is evidence of the fact that morally we are still slaves. And when Gandhiji talked of moral independence this is what he had in mind. (...) Can you name a single country in the Western world which made its progress in the last one hundred years entirely because of what the State did?⁴⁷⁹

In this passage, it is clear that by the end of the 1960s, JP had taken his anti-statism and antipolitical views to an extreme by stating that acting in accordance with the government meant obeying a slave mentality. In the previous passage we also come across the trope of Indian civilization as the source of thought and politics that had been popularized following the *swadeshi* movement. By referring to the "slave mentality" of the middle classes in India, JP was lamenting the abandonment of the ideal of *swaraj* as autonomy—political, moral and intellectual—that had been at the core of early XX century radical nationalism and of his own programme since the late 1940s.

In short, JP's position by the turn of the 1970s was defined by his diagnosis that the two decades that had followed the transfer of power had been marked by a complete failure to defend and promote the ideals of *swaraj*, and the triumph of *raj niti*:

On the whole, the last decade has been unsatisfactory, though it ushered in the 'green revolution' and gave momentum to the Gramdan movement. (...) In this very decade political uncertainties

⁴⁷⁹ Gandhi after Independence, New Delhi, 18 February 1969, Edited transcript of a speech delivered under the auspices of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, New Delhi, in JP Papers, NMML.

and disintegration spread, the power monopoly of political uncertainties and disintegration spread (...) the power monopoly became widespread, political morality touched a new low, crossing the floor became a contagion, political indiscipline increased, selfism (sic.), and lust, for office became the rule, legislators were drawn into a market for sale and purchase and devaluation of ideologies continued.⁴⁸⁰

As a result of this diagnosis, towards the end of the 1960s JP continued to express his conviction that a revolution was necessary in India. In 1967 he denounced the growing unrest among important sections of Indian students as a reaction to what he referred to as the crisis of the community, brought about by the Indian State's betrayal of Gandhi's heritage of service and sacrifice.⁴⁸¹ During a sojourn in the United States, he made clear the joy and excitement he felt after witnessing "the new spirit" moving among the students of the country. To an audience gathered before him at Princeton University on April 2, 1968, JP conveyed his perception that "a very deep revolution (was taking place) inside the hearts and minds of young people." It was not only Vietnam, he went on, but something "deeper (...) happening in their hearts. I think they are questioning the values of this civilization, which is sparkling and so attractive to look at."⁴⁸²

Regarding the situation in India in the late 1960s, JP's renewed insistence on revolution was fuelled by what he saw as the growing entrenchment of the forces of reaction and feudalism. This process had resulted in the creation of "a capitalist society" based on exacerbated exploitation.⁴⁸³ In 1969, JP declared his sympathy for the Naxalbari rebellion which, albeit violently, was among the few attempts to contribute to the situation of the poor of the country. In his view, violence could present a valid option given the corrupt and inefficient workings of democracy in India. However, he added, the really revolutionary path could only be the one that adhered to the principles of *lok niti*:

I have been a student of revolutions because I was a Marxist myself. My interest in the history of revolutions is as keen today as

⁴⁸⁰ Convocation Address at Banaras Hindu University, 18 February 1970, JP Papers, NMML.

⁴⁸¹ Press statement issued on 16 January 1967 condemning violence and arson at Patna on 5 January 1967, J.P. Papers, NMML.

⁴⁸² "The Revolutionary Situation Around the World", address at a Conference held at Princeton University on 2 April 1968 I J.P. Papers, NMML.

⁴⁸³ "Need for a Non-violent Revolution..."

it ever was. My conclusion after a study of violent revolution is that a violent revolution does bring about a revolution in the sense that it uproots the old social order and destroys it from its foundation. Therefore it is looked upon as a successful revolution. (...) But what came out of these revolutions? After the revolutions, the power still was not with the people. The power did not go to the people; to the dispossessed. (...) (W)e have to snatch the initiative from the hands of politicians, from the Parliament and the legislatures and give it back to the people. This is our job.⁴⁸⁴

In June 1970, after receiving a letter stating the murder of two *sarvodaya* workers at the hands of Maoist sympathisers in Muzzaffarpur district, he retook walking from village to village, promoting *sarvodaya* among peasants. In spite of his disappointment regarding the effectiveness of *Bhoodan* during the last years of the 1960s, JP would reassert his commitment to *sarvodaya*, which, along with the culture of *lok niti*, remained at the heart of his programme until the mid 1970s. In fact, by the turn of the 1970s, he was more adamant than ever regarding the need for *lok niti* in order to “snatch the initiative from the hands of politicians, from the Parliament and the legislatures and give it back to the people.”⁴⁸⁵

However, despite his apparently renewed momentum, shortly after resuming his *sarvodaya* campaign in rural Bihar the curses of old age fell upon him and stopped him on his tracks. Late in 1971 he suffered a mild heart attack.⁴⁸⁶ On the 11th of October, JP drafted a statement in which he announced his will to retire from political and social work for an entire year. He presented his exhaustion and desire to spend more time with his wife Prabhavati, who was sick with terminal cancer at the time, as the reasons for his decision. In contrast to his 1952 fast, which he had described as an exercise in meditation and reflection, this time JP assured simply that this break would be nothing but a period for attending his personal life.⁴⁸⁷

Barely a few months following the end of JP’s self-imposed period of rest, on April 15 1973, Prabhavati died as a result of complications caused by uterine cancer. In a letter written to his biographers, Jayaprakash describes the pain she

⁴⁸⁴ “Need for a Non-violent Revolution...”

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*, 415.

⁴⁸⁷ Statement Announcing Withdrawal from Political and Social Work for One Year, Bombay, 11 October 1971, J.P. Papers, NMML.

had endured during the last stages of her illness, and talks about the guilt and chagrin caused by his inability to help his wife before her definite departure: “An operation six months earlier would have kept her alive for several years more. (...) I cannot tell you what her absence means to me. There is no zest or interest left in life, and the very will to live seems to be dead within me.”⁴⁸⁸ Prabhavati’s death marked a moment of important rupture for JP. His wife, who had remained alongside him from the beginning of his political life, was the last living connection he had to the members of the generation born and grown during the culminating period of the freedom struggle, and to the memory of a life lived in the shadow of the promises—and disappointments— of national independence. Finding himself alone, JP remained one of the last surviving representatives of the expectations and experiences of a generation born during the opening decades of the XX century and devoted to the promotion of radical anti-colonial nationalism, the legacy of Non-Cooperation and the programme of socialism.

Despite his physical exhaustion and emotional frailness, JP returned to the public arena following the death of Prabhavati. In July 1973, JP founded an organization called *Lok Niti Parishad*, through which he directed and published the weekly *Everyman’s: Perspectives for Today and Tomorrow*. In the journal’s statement of policy, JP presented his concern with the damage inflicted by modern industrial society and parliamentary democracy upon the community and people of India as the point of departure of the debates and discussions *Everyman’s* sought to promote. Further, he emphasised the urgent need for younger Indians, to whom he referred to as the post-Independence generation, to commit themselves to social transformation and revolution.⁴⁸⁹ Old enough to be the grandfather of the members of the post-independence generation, and preceded by the legend of his lifelong political career, JP was perceived by many as a symbol of the selfless devotion to political revolution and social transformation defended by long-dead and canonized figures like Gandhi.

⁴⁸⁸ Letter to Allan and Wendy Scarfe, 17 October 1973, cited in Allan Scarfe and Wendy Scarfe, *Remembering Jayaprakesh* (New Delhi: Siddharth, 1997), 304.

⁴⁸⁹ *Everyman’s*, vol. 1 no. 1, 7 July 1973.

During the opening years of the 1970s, JP did not only contribute to the promotion of this image of himself, he also advanced the view that the 1960s had represented the failure and betrayal of the ideals defended during the freedom struggle. In an address before university students at Benares, he announced that the questions and challenges for the new generations were many. But the answer, he went on, was obvious. The solution could not come through the action of the state, but had to emerge from a proper understanding of the duties of citizenship and the power of popular action:

Political parties, legislators and ministers are becoming autocrats. They are not afraid of public opinion since there is no public opinion. They care less for their voters because the voters are not enlightened or organized. Political parties do make their own propaganda, but that is not to create a healthy and impartial public opinion, which may rise above party politics, and effectively express itself in matters of right or wrong, moral or immoral, just or unjust.⁴⁹⁰

He concluded his address in a tone that would prove to be prophetic, asserting his belief in *lok niti* by assuring that if politicians and parties were “shouldered well” the 1970s could “well prove to be the most constructive and epoch-making chapter in the history of Indian democracy.”⁴⁹¹

6.1.2 Joining hands with the Post-Independence generation

Har baar vidyarthi jeete hai, is bar vidyarthi jeetenge.
Jayaprakash Narayan, June 1974⁴⁹²

During the opening months of 1974 Jayaprakash offered his open support to the massive student-led protest movements that developed in Gujarat and Bihar. He quickly became the most visible and outspoken leader of the movement in his home state. As a result, JP once again rose to national prominence. His return to the political arena would energize and rejuvenate him; in his view, the student agitations in defiance of both the state and central governments represented not only the high peak of his career of opposition and

⁴⁹⁰ Convocation Address at Banaras Hindu University, 18 February 1970 (JP Papers).

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Appeal to students in Patna, 29 June 1974, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. X (1972-1979), 312.

protest, but also an unmatched opportunity to re-enact the emancipatory thrust of Non-Cooperation and bring the emancipatory project of *lok niti* to its culmination.

The massive protests that took shape between 1974 and 1975 must be seen in the context of a broader change in the political landscape of India marked by the emergence of important movements of mobilization and organization at the grassroots level. These were joined by a common platform of protest marked by an anti-systemic and anti-statist thrust, and a shared diagnosis regarding the harmful effects of exclusionary capitalist development, callous state policies and widespread social oppression. At the same time the late 1960s witnessed, as we have seen, the fragmentation of older leftist forces, a process that was coupled with the gradual loss of legitimacy of the Congress government as a result of the state's failure to deliver on the promises of the Nehruvian years. This is a process that has been explained in terms of a deinstitutionalization of the Congress⁴⁹³, of an overall crisis of the political-economic and ideological structures of the state's socialist promises⁴⁹⁴, and of the "brutal dislocation" brought about by the combination of the forces of capitalist development and the shortcomings of India's democratic practices.⁴⁹⁵ Along with the emergence and growth of Naxalism since the late 1960s, during the opening years of the decades a large number of protest movements took shape in India, including the Jharkand Mukti Morcha, the All-Assam Students Union, the Self-Employed Women's Association, the Chipko Movement and the Dalit Panthers, all of which were created in 1972.⁴⁹⁶

At par with the emergence of this revolutionary thrust of protest, the political capital of the government of Indira Gandhi, boosted by a series of

⁴⁹³ Ray and Katzenstein, "Introduction. In the Beginning There Was the Nehruvian State."

⁴⁹⁴ Omvedt, "Peasants, Dalits and Women: Democracy and India's New Social Movements; *Reinventing Revolution : New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*."

⁴⁹⁵ Basu, "Grass Roots Movements and the State: Reflections on Radical Change in India."

⁴⁹⁶ Ray and Katzenstein, "Introduction. In the Beginning There Was the Nehruvian State," 18.

popular policies—including the nationalization of banks and the elimination of privy purses of Indian princes—and the patriotic fervour generated by India's victorious involvement in the Pakistani civil war of 1971, begun to seriously diminish between 1973 and 1974. These two years saw successive crop failures, the spread of unemployment as the result of economic recession, food scarcity, inflation and a considerable drop in production of basic goods.⁴⁹⁷ The support for the central government dropped among important sectors of the urban population as well as among sections of rich peasants across North India. Adding to these economic and political crises, the perception that the source of the country's difficulties laid in the widespread corruption and inefficiency of the political class became entrenched across different sectors of society. For many in India, asserted a Congress M.P. in 1974, corruption, like pollution, had become an undeniable fact of life.⁴⁹⁸ Much of the criticism fell on the figure of the Prime Minister, and the Congress party, which, as has been argued by Sudipta Kaviraj, began to be seen for the first time since independence as a conservative force underwriting social inequality rather than as an agent of change and transformation.⁴⁹⁹

At the same time, the perceived decline in educational facilities and teaching practices, as well as the lack of job prospects for university graduates became important point of contention that guided student protest across different locations in India during the 1960s and the early years of the 1970s.⁵⁰⁰ These demands gained national prominence as a result of the immense growth in the number of students during the 1960s. Just between 1950 and 1960, the number of college students increased from 263,000 to 645,000, and by 1966, more than 1,094,000 students were enrolled in about 2,565 colleges.⁵⁰¹ As a result of the

⁴⁹⁷ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*, 15-17.

⁴⁹⁸ An Open Letter From Vasant Sathe M.P., *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (Bombay) Sunday July 21, 1974.

⁴⁹⁹ Kaviraj, "A Critique of the Passive Revolution," 70.

⁵⁰⁰ Philip G. Altbach, *The Student Revolution : A Global Analysis* (Bombay: Lalvani Pub. House, 1970); Craig Jeffrey, *Timepass. Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010).

⁵⁰¹ Philip G. Altbach, "Student Politics and Higher Education in India," in *The Student Revolution: A Global Analysis*, ed. Philip G. Altbach (Bombay: Lalvani Publishing House, 1970), 107.

growth of the student population, the increase in the vocal expression of their demands and the incapacity of the system to respond adequately, student political groups had, by the end of the 1960s, become an important “demand group”, a category defined by Lloyd Rudolph and Suzanne Hoeber Rudolph as the shape taken by the mobilization of mass public that overflows the formal institutions of the political process in defence of definite interests.⁵⁰² The student unrest of the early 1970s, borne out of this milieu of disenchantment, frustration and growing politicization, would lead to important changes in the political system in the country, mainly as a result of its canalization through what would come to be called the JP movement.

In the last weeks of 1973 students of L. D. Engineering College in Ahmedabad organized to protest against the rise in mess charges and the corruption of the state government of Gujarat. The incident soon gave way to a large movement of protest that demanded the dissolution of the state assembly and new elections. Barely a few days after the start of the protest, JP raised his voice in support of the movement, and urged all the students in Gujarat to revive the revolutionary thrust of Non-Cooperation and “leave the classrooms (to) lead the people” in the campaign against the “power-hungry and tradition-bound leadership” of the country.⁵⁰³ In his view, the student movement in Gujarat was a “path-finder in India’s march towards democracy”, and represented a clear and valuable example of the potency of *lok niti*, inasmuch as it had “established for the first time in India the primacy of the people, going over the heads of organized parties and their will.”⁵⁰⁴

Despite the intervention of the police, federal forces and the army, and the decree to place the state under President’s rule,⁵⁰⁵ intense protests and mob violence in Gujarat were maintained for nearly three months. During this time at least a hundred people were killed, more than 3,000 thousand injured and over

⁵⁰² Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi : The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 252-53.

⁵⁰³ “Students urged to lead people”, *Times of India*, 12 January 1974.

⁵⁰⁴ Jayaprakash Narayan and A. B. Shah, *Prison Diary, 1975* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1977), 46.

⁵⁰⁵ “Gujarat put under President’s rule”, *Times of India*, 9 February 1974.

8,000 were arrested.⁵⁰⁶ Throughout this time, JP consistently supported the movement, echoing the students' demand for the dissolution of the assembly, and denounced the "permissive attitude to corruption among the top leadership" of the country, the Prime Minister included, as the main source of the crisis of India.⁵⁰⁷ In early February, he visited Ahmedabad to witness the movement first-hand, but was forced to leave for Delhi shortly after his arrival, due to severe health complications as a result of a chest infection.⁵⁰⁸

Concurrently with the events taking place in Gujarat, a similar scenario of protest gestated in JP's home state of Bihar. Economically more backward and politically more unstable than Gujarat, Bihar had gone through more than 10 governments and three spells of president's rule between 1967 and early 1974.⁵⁰⁹ In addition to the political unsteadiness, the faulty implementation of the agricultural developments promoted through the Green Revolution and successive crop failures had led to a situation of acute scarcity of food grain in the State⁵¹⁰ and general social unrest. Following a wave of student agitation in December 1973, massive mobilizations took place on January 21 in Patna, resulting in clashes between the police and protesters, the arrest of more than two hundred people and the total paralysation of the city.⁵¹¹

On that same day, a large group of student, presided by the young Laloo Prasad Yadav, came together at Patna University for the formation of the Bihar Chhatra Sangarshan Samiti (BCSS). The organization presented a list of demands that included the lowering of prices of food-grains, reduction in tuition fees and prices of textbooks and cinema tickets, better hostel accommodation and better food in hostels, students' participation in university management, jobs for the educated unemployed, *Bharatiya* education, and action against the hoarders, profiteers and blackmarketeers.⁵¹² Over the next few weeks, groups of

⁵⁰⁶ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*, 37.

⁵⁰⁷ "JP for assembly dissolution", *Times of India*, 15 January 1974, "Congress lacks honesty: JP", *ibid.*, 14 January 1974.

⁵⁰⁸ "JP admitted to hospital", *Times of India*, 20 February 1974.

⁵⁰⁹ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*, 38-39.

⁵¹⁰ "Acute scarcity of foodgrains in Bihar hinterland", *Times of India*, 5 January 1974.

⁵¹¹ "Bihar Bandh paralyses life in Patna", *Times of India*, 22 January 1974.

⁵¹² Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*, 39-40.

diverse ideological leanings joined the BCSS to form a wide coalition of student movements. Among these were the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarti Parishad (All-India Students Association) which was an important arm of the RSS, the Samajwadi Yuvajan Sabha (Socialist Youth Council), and the Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti (Students' Struggle Committee), which came together to form the Bihar Rajya Sangharsh Samiti (Bihar State Struggle Committee).⁵¹³ With the coming together of these groups, a new list of demands was produced, at the top of which figured the demand for the removal of the Chief Minister of Bihar, Abdul Ghafoor, and the dissolution of the State Legislative Assembly.

On the 20th of March 1974, JP, who had initially been unfavourably inclined towards what he saw as the short-term political goals of the BRSS⁵¹⁴ openly addressed Ghafoor and, in a friendly tone, advised him to resign in view of the total failure of his administration, and as a way of stopping the widespread violence that had already resulted in nearly 3,000 people arrested, tens of deaths, and unchecked social disruptions.⁵¹⁵ Later that same month Indira Gandhi, in a manner reminiscent of her father almost twenty years before, came out to state that the agitations in Bihar were an attack on the ideals of the nation.⁵¹⁶ JP swiftly and openly identified himself as an ally of the students of Bihar. In a statement issued on March 30, he warned the Prime Minister that, should the government continue to ignore the protesters and their demands, he would personally head a "procession of *shanti sainiks*" (soldiers of peace) against it. He further lamented the callous response of the government stating: "It is not for this that I fought for freedom."⁵¹⁷

From this moment onwards, the confrontation between the student movement and the government became entwined with the growing personal confrontation between JP and Indira Gandhi. Once again, JP found himself at the head of a national movement of protest. Over the next few months the violence

⁵¹³ Trevor Driberg and Sarala Jag Mohan, *Emergency in India* (New Delhi: Manas, 1975), 46-47.

⁵¹⁴ Minoo Masani, *Jp, Mission Partly Accomplished* (Delhi: Macmillan Co. of India, 1977), 54.

⁵¹⁵ "JP says Ghafoor should go", *Times of India*, 21 March 1974.

⁵¹⁶ "Nation's ideals under attack: P. M.", *Times of India*, 22 March 1974.

⁵¹⁷ Cited in Masani, *Jp, Mission Partly Accomplished*, 56.

of the protesters increased, while JP's position regarding Indira and the government became increasingly more radical and inflexible. On June 6, he declared that a point had been reached after which no reconciliation with the Congress appeared possible.⁵¹⁸

During the summer of 1974, the student movement in Bihar began receiving open support from old *sarvodaya* workers, as well as from the most important organisations of Hindu nationalism, including the R.S.S., the Jana Sangh and the Shiv Sena.⁵¹⁹ By the end of August, the JP movement had become a national issue, managing to rally together numerous and important opposition parties including the Congress(O), the Jana Sangh, the Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Socialist Party and the Swatantra Party.⁵²⁰ In this sense, JP had become not only the leader of the most important movement of protest gestated in independent India, but had also managed to revive under the motto of *Indira Hatao* the thrust of Anti-Congressism that had been so vehemently defended by Lohia and himself during the 1950s and early 1960s.

Despite having abnegated of the validity of institutional politics for more than two decades, JP declared in 1974 that the protest movement could not be limited to the sphere of constructive, non-statist work, but had openly to confront the state and, in the spirit of the freedom movement, force it to bend to the power and will of the millions of India:

I am not going to use angry language. But what I am going to say will contain the ideas of a revolutionary. It will not be easy to act upon them. You will have to make great sacrifices, undergo sufferings, face lathis and bullets, fill up jails. (...). Friends, this is a revolution, a total revolution. This is not a movement, not merely for the dissolution of the assembly. We have to go far, very far. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, the people still have to travel many long miles to achieve that freedom (for) which thousands of the country's youths made sacrifices, for which Bhagat Singh and his comrades, revolutionaries of Bengal, of Maharashtra, of the whole country, were shot dead and hanged to death. (...) Millions of our countrymen filled jails again and again to gain freedom, but after twenty-seven years of that freedom the people are still groaning.

⁵¹⁸ "No reconciliation with Congress: JP", *Times of India*, June 7 1974.

⁵¹⁹ "Shiv Sena chief meets J.P.", *Times of India*, June 17 1974.

⁵²⁰ Radhakanta Barik, *Politics of the Jp Movement* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1977), 77.

Hunger, soaring prices and corruption strike everywhere. The people are being crushed under all sorts of injustice. (...) My blood boiled (after the government repressed students in Patna). The fight for freedom was conducted by Gandhiji on the basis of truth and non-violence (and) (n)ow the government has taken the road of falsehood and violence.⁵²¹

From that moment onwards the Bihar movement gained considerable strength as the result of the coming together of the definite political demands and capacity for mobilization garnered by the BCSS, and the leadership of JP, who imbued the movement with the oppositional thrust of *lok niti* and an antipolitical rhetoric that bemoaned the need for a purification of politics and political institutions. Jayaprakash described the Bihar movement as a clear demonstration of the power of the masses—or *jana shakti*. Indeed, he went so far as to present it as the continuation of his previous struggles and the crystallisation of the political ideals that had given shape to his life-long devotion to protest:

The force of our struggle comes from the people's extreme exasperation with the regime of political and administrative corruption established by the ruling groups, and their abject failure to reduce mass poverty and inequality in spite of the uninterrupted exercise of power over a whole quarter of a century. (...) Our first task has been to demand a replacement of the extremely corrupt legislative and executive regime in Bihar. But the time has come to spell out once again the nature of the structural transformation of our polity and economy for which the Bihar movement stands. The movement must continue to mobilize the masses for such a transformation. (...) I have been voicing for decades my thoughts on the kind of society we should build. And I welcome the opportunity to do so again in the context of the Bihar movement.⁵²²

On the 31 of October 1974, Jayaprakash gave a speech before 200,000 people in Delhi that went on for over a hundred minutes. Despite having undergone two major surgeries during the previous year, the 72 year-old appeared visibly rejuvenated by the impulse of collective protest and direct popular action. "Revolution", he asserted, "is like a mad elephant. (...) A revolution can waste itself or it can crate a new society. (...) Every revolution

⁵²¹ Ibid. 286-290.

⁵²² Jayaprakash Narayan and Raj Krishna, "The Socio-Economic Objectives and Programme of the Bihar Movement, 25 February 1975 " in *In Theory and in Practice. Essays on the Politics of Jayaprakash Narayan*, ed. David Selbourne (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), 127.

writes its own book.” India, he concluded, had begun writing the first chapter of its revolution.⁵²³

On November 4, the people of Patna awoke to find their city sealed off and heavily guarded by police forces. JP had travelled back from Delhi a couple of days before and was scheduled to head a massive silent march of protest on that day. In apparent good spirits, JP remarked jokingly: “It appears that Patna is facing a Chinese invasion.”⁵²⁴ Thousands of people gathered that day to follow him. He addressed the crowds and recited the famous lines written by the nationalist poet Dinkar:

Do raah, samay he rath gharghar naad suno,
Singhaasan khaali kare ki janata aati hai
(Two paths, listen to the roar of the chariot of time,
Empty the throne, for the people are coming)⁵²⁵

The silent march was attacked by the police, who charged the crowd with lathis. Among the injured that day was the old JP, whose picture as he lay on the ground with a grimace of intense pain as a result of the attack was made famous across the country the very next day by the newspapers that covered the incident.⁵²⁶

The march of November 4 was a breaking point in the development of the Bihar movement, and a moment of culmination in JP’s life. Like in the case of Lala Lajpat Rai, who, by being nearly beaten to death by colonial police officers in November 1928 had inspired the uprising of Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad, the aggression against JP, the old and sick defendant of *sarvodaya* and last among the heroes of the freedom movement, came to symbolize the lack of legitimacy and arbitrariness of the forces of the Indian state and the government of Indira Gandhi. That brief moment, in which JP faced the repressive forces of the state and welcomed its violence, captured the potency and possibilities of his *lok niti*, and brought the culmination of his career of protest and opposition.

⁵²³ “JP: time is ripe for revolution”, *Times of India*, 1 November 1974.

⁵²⁴ Masani, *Jp, Mission Partly Accomplished*, 84.

⁵²⁵ Cited in *ibid.*, 89.

⁵²⁶ See Appendix A.

6.2 Jayaprakash Narayan, the Lok Nayak

The early 1970s were not only the period of culmination of JP's life of protest and of his devotion to the thrust of early XX century radical nationalism. The years leading up to the declaration of the state of Emergency in 1975 also saw the crystallisation of JP's programme of opposition, based on the ideals of socialism and the revolutionary arsenal of Gandhian techniques of protest, and geared at the promotion of the political culture of *lok niti*. This section is devoted to the analysis of JP's programme of Total Revolution and the fundamental elements of his leadership of the JP movement during the early 1970s. In the next subsection, I will argue that the programme of Total Revolution presents a synthetic concoction of the most important antipolitical leanings, demands and rhetorical elements he had defended throughout his life. In this sense, and despite its much decried fuzziness, Total Revolution must be seen as the final stage in the apparent "zigzag and tortuous chart of unsteadiness and blind groping"⁵²⁷ that had been his intellectual and political life. In subsection 5.2.2, I will show that the success of his leadership of the widespread protest movement of 1974-1975 can be seen as the result of his adherence to a strict populist logic, according to the formulation of populism made by Ernesto Laclau.

6.2.1 Total Revolution

During the summer of 1974, at a point at which, as we have seen, the Bihar movement was receiving national attention and open support from disparate groups from all sides of the ideological spectrum, JP began to sketch a programme of socio-political change that broadened the initial aims of the movement beyond immediate political goals to include more general and fundamental transformations. Over the course of the following months this programme would come to be identified with Total Revolution, an idea that despite being widely publicized remained undefined and hazy. Total Revolution is

⁵²⁷ *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, in Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan. *Selected Works*, 100.

perhaps JP's best-known slogan, as well as the target of many dismissive and questioning comments from analysts and detractors of his work and ideas. This section will attempt to sketch out the contours of JP's Total Revolution, such as it was promoted during 1974 and 1975, and relate its assumptions and implications to the larger body of his thought and zigzagging political path.

The first time JP spoke of a Total Revolution was in the course of a speech delivered to *Bhoodan* volunteer workers in Patna, on November 1953. It is worth quoting at length, since in it we can find the ideas that would constitute the core of Total Revolution in the mid 1970s:

Bhoodan is not a programme of merely collecting and distributing land. It is rather the first step towards a total revolution, social, political and economic. It stands for a society which would strive for the good of all and in which everybody would be happy. In such a society there would be no distinction of high and low. Justice and equality would form its distinguishing features and exploitation in any form would be completely eliminated. Power and authority would vest with the people in the true sense, and they would regulate and administer their own affairs. Central authority would be sought to be extinguished and, if it continued to exist, the sphere and extent of its operation would be minimized. The village will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. There will be perfect democracy based upon individual freedom and the individual will be the architect of his own government.(...) This can be done through an economic reconstruction which will ensure the fruit of labour to the workers, which is possible only when there is decentralization in the economic field, when the system of production is organized on the basis of village industries and the large-scale industries that will have to be essentially retained, will be socially owned and managed by workers.⁵²⁸

This passage makes clear that the idea of Total Revolution was, in the 1970s, already an old element in JP's thought. Indeed, it's original use coincides with the beginning of JP's rejection of materialism as a basis for politics, as well as of his conviction that the projects of Gandhi and Marx could be brought together in India for the sake of creating a new social order based on justice, equality, freedom and people's power. Moreover, in this early description of Total

⁵²⁸ "Bhoodan, the First Step towards a Total Revolution", Speech at the Bhoodan Workers Training Camp, Mokamah (Patna), 14 November 1953 in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. VI (1950-1954), 382.

Revolution, it is possible to find references to JP's most cherished ideals: namely, "a society that would strive for the good of all", which was one of the definitions he gave of *sarvodaya*; the elimination of all forms of exploitation and the promotion of justice and equality, which were, in JP's view, the central pillars of socialism; and the extinction of centralization, corruption and immoral politics, accompanied by the promotion of individual freedom and village autonomy, three of the main tenets defended as part of his project of *lok niti*.

Despite having abnegated of the validity of institutional politics for more than two decades, JP declared in 1974 that a Total Revolution could not be limited to the sphere of constructive, non-statist work, but had to openly confront the state and, in the spirit of the freedom movement, force it to bend to the power and will of the millions of India. Likewise, the final objective of Total Revolution was a continuation of JP's attempt, developed during the 1950s and 60s, of bringing Gandhi and Marx together in the pursuit of an unalienated life. The protest of students, JP insisted, should not be confined to asking for a change in the political regime, but should instead aim at toppling the whole moral and socioeconomic system based on alienation regnant in independent India. In this sense, Total Revolution aimed at promoting the goal of socialism—"My objective has not changed. (...) It is the same as that of socialism or communism: a society free from exploitation, a classless society, a stateless society,"⁵²⁹—through the revolutionary practice of *sarvodaya*.⁵³⁰

In short, Total Revolution appears as old JP's consistent, albeit fuzzy, attempt to bring together the central ideas and concepts he had defended since the early 1930s. On the one hand, he saw in Total Revolution a movement for the definite establishment of the true ideals of India's freedom movement he militantly defended during the 1930s and 40s. On the other, it embraced the main postulates of *lok niti* practice such as he had exposed and promoted them during the 1950s and 60s. Both broad sets of ideals were brought together by JP's

⁵²⁹ "My Objective Remains Unchanged: Change in Tactics Only", in *Everyman's*, 3 August 1974.

⁵³⁰ See, Jayaprakash Narayan, *Towards Revolution*, 24 February 1975, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the *Bhoodan* movement, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. X (1972-1979), 423-26.

defence of *loka shakti*, or people's power, and the promotion of voluntarism, self-sacrifice and the direct action of the multitude.

Having emerged as the result of JP's adoption of the demands fuelling the widespread unrest of the early months of 1974—namely the rejection of the corruption and inefficiency of the state and the demand for the ousting of two Chief Ministers and, eventually, of the Prime Minister herself—Total Revolution also represents the last and climatic formulation of JP's lifelong devotion to protest in the face of power. However, and despite being brandished as the war cry of the Bihar Movement following the summer of 1974 and an openly anti-Indira programme, JP insisted that Total Revolution had to go beyond the demands of student groups and the contingencies of the moment. In an interview granted to the journalist Kuldip Nayar, JP stated: "I do not deny that, by and large, the persons who support me are opposed to Mrs. Gandhi and the Congress Party. The anti-Mrs. Gandhi opposition parties are behind my movement. But my movement had gone beyond them (sic.). Even if those parties withdrew their support, the movement will continue."⁵³¹ In this sense, JP clearly did not think of Total Revolution merely as a political platform. In his view, it had to lead to a deep transformation of the moral habits and desires of the people, and rulers, of India.

Throughout this dissertation, it has been argued that JP defended diverse, and often contradictory, forms of antipolitics as part of his devotion to protest and opposition. During the 1930s and early 40s, in his stage as a socialist ideologue and leader, he opposed the political configuration of colonialism; in the 1950s and 60s, he attacked professional politics and political parties as part of his demand to purify the practice of politics. His adoption of the ideal of Total Revolution as part of his popular leadership between 1974 and 1975 must be seen as his most polished attempt to appeal to an antipolitical dismissal of traditional ideologies and party positions for the sake of popular mobilization. In this sense, it was necessary that Total Revolution remain an open, undefined and hazy programme. Only in this way, could he make it attractive and potentially

⁵³¹ Jayaprakash, Interview with Kuldip Nayar, published in *Statesman*, 15 June 1974.

meaningful across party lines and, as a result, garner support from such an array of disparate groups. A scholar of antipolitics has argued that it is precisely the capacity of antipolitical leaders and groups to generate “post-ideological” or “trans-ideological” enthusiasm that make them such formidable opponents to established political institutions and figures.⁵³² Intellectually, as we have seen, the haziness of Total Revolution has been attacked as a defect and a failing of JP’s leadership. Politically, however, it proved to be highly effective. In its intended haziness, Total Revolution would prove capable of appealing to both left and right; in this sense, it must be seen as a conscious attempt to devise a classically antipolitical practice of protest. In his interview with Kudlip Nayar, JP declared: “Ideology is a very deceptive word. What is wanted (in the movement) is the end to all ideologies. (...) The first condition is honesty and sincerity and the second is the attitude (of rejection) towards exploitation, which has nothing to do with ideology. (...) It is not ideology that can answer the question. Let scientists and economists sit and chalk out a programme. (...) All that is needed to make one’s own decisions is common sense and intelligence.”⁵³³

This haziness and openly anti-ideological hue of JP’s programme would make it easy for different sectors, including some among those which the young JP had branded as the forces of reaction, to ride the wave of Total Revolution and obtain significant political gains. These groupings are dealt with in the next section. But before we move on, it is important to focus on the patently populist logic inherent to JP’s anti-ideological Total Revolution. In this regard, in the next subsection I will argue that, as a result of its obeisance to a clearly populist logic, Total Revolution can be seen as JP’s way of complementing the political practices and attitudes he had consistently opposed to *raj niti* and, through the articulation of an programme capable of bringing together large contingents of oppositional masses, giving the final touch to the political culture of *lok niti*.

⁵³² Alessiato, “Antipolitics as Participation: Paradox and Challenges,” 18.

⁵³³ Ibid.

6.2.2 The JP Movement as a triumph of populism

Two weeks after being assaulted by the police during the massive march in Patna, Jayaprakash reappeared in public to address a large crowd on November 18 1974. One report describes that JP was moved to tears at witnessing the large crowd that had gathered in response to his injuries and was unable to speak for a few minutes. Finally, and visibly shaken, he declared his intention to carry on with the promotion of popular protest and the programme of people's government.⁵³⁴ However, and despite JP's continued fervour, the large movement of protest he had headed during 1974 would soon be taken over by professional politicians and institutional political forces.

On November 25, JP met in Delhi with leaders of several opposition forces and political parties—including the Jana Sangh, the Tamil DMK, the Socialist Party, Charan Singh's Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Congress (O), the *Sarvodaya* movement and the Akali Dal—to plan a *gherao* of the Parliament that would involve ten lakh people.⁵³⁵ Minoo Masani, one of JP's closest associates during those years, reports that Jayaprakash refused Charan Singh's suggestion of becoming the head of a national front of opposition. JP answered by assuring that the Bihar movement was a people's movement, and he had no intention of turning it into a party movement. Instead, Jayaprakash suggested that all parties unite to choose a single candidate to run against the Congress; with all the support of the opposition forces, this person, he assured, would be a true *Janata Pratinidhi*, or representative of the people.⁵³⁶

During the following months, JP resumed his touring of India and, with the support of the opposition forces that had rallied on his side, extended the message of popular protest beyond the borders of Bihar. He addressed rallies in Haryana⁵³⁷, Lucknow⁵³⁸, Bombay⁵³⁹ and Kerala⁵⁴⁰. The high point of popular

⁵³⁴ Masani, *Jp, Mission Partly Accomplished*, 91-92.

⁵³⁵ "JP's plan for mass gherao of Parliament endorsed", *Times of India*, 26 November 1974.

⁵³⁶ Masani, *Jp, Mission Partly Accomplished*, 99-100.

⁵³⁷ "People's movement in Haryana launched", *Times of India*, 28 November 1974.

⁵³⁸ "JP releases manifest on U.P. agitation", *Times of India*, 28 December 1974.

⁵³⁹ "JP asks Marxists to join agitation", *Times of India*, 26 January 1975.

⁵⁴⁰ "Ghafoor threatens to arrest JP", *Times of India*, 30 January 1975.

support for the JP movement came on March 6 1975, on which day he addressed a massive crowd in Delhi, probably the largest gathered before him so far.⁵⁴¹ On that day, JP accused Indira Gandhi of attempting to impose a dictatorship in India and gave her an ultimatum of four days to resign, threatening to launch a movement of non-cooperation in the face of the government if she refused.⁵⁴² By that moment, the JP movement had clearly overflowed the limits of the movement of protest started by students in Bihar a year earlier. It had become a movement that covered practically all of North India, and drew support from the main opposition parties, with the notable exception of the communists.

Given his vehement rejection of institutional and party politics during the previous twenty years, the implications of the success of the JP movement among political parties has to be discussed in order to round up this study of his life and work. For this task, in the following paragraphs I will approach the JP movement following the postulates of Ernesto Laclau regarding populism. In his work *On Populist Reason*, Laclau discusses the importance of the relations established between demand groups in the constitution of “the people” as a potential historical actor. The first step in this process, Laclau argues, must be the delimitation of a clear frontier that separates “the people” from power. Secondly, “the people” has to be defined in relation to an articulation of equivalent demands so as to allow for the development of significant political mobilization.⁵⁴³ In other words, Laclau describes a political situation defined by the presentation of two mutually antagonistic blocs—one representing the people, the other seen as the anti-people—which are defined as not only incapable of attempting a reconciliation between them but, moreover, as theoretically helpless to even try. Political action, in this theory of populism, is not based on the search for consensus. Rather, it stems from the configuration and

⁵⁴¹ Estimates of the total number of people present at this march vary considerably: *The Times of India* reported in its headline of 7 March a total of 2 lakh (200,000); the organisers of the march, among who figures Atal Behari Vajpayee, Charan Singh and Raj Narain, claimed the presence of 15 lakh (1,500,000) in *ibid.*; on the other hand, the historian Bipan Chandra speaks of “an eight-kilometre-long procession of several hundred thousand people”, Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*, 62. See Appendix B.

⁵⁴² “2 lakhs join march to Parliament”, *Times of India*, 7 March 1975.

⁵⁴³ Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 74-128.

underscoring of a frontier of separation between sides that cannot be bridged. It is in this sense that Laclau's framework for the study of populism is clearly useful for a critical approach to JP's *lok niti*, inasmuch as the latter was based on the clear opposition between the realms of *lok* and *raj*. In the context of the growing movement of protest developed in 1974-1975, the framework becomes increasingly relevant for the study of Jayaprakash's leadership, based as it was on this simple opposition, and capable as it proved to be of leading the most formidable movement of protest against the state in contemporary India.

As we saw above, during late 1973 and early 1974 a generalized social unrest that focused on the corruption and inefficacy of the government gave way to the emergence of numerous moments and movements of protest across North India. Such a situation drove the state to answer in increasingly reactionary ways, adding more fuel to the fire of protest. The student movements would mark a moment of dramatic distancing between the state and the protesters, two blocs whose positions began by then to be perceived as irreconcilable. Writing in the late 1970s, Francine Frankel identified the Gujarat movement as a "political watershed" that "marked the collapse of (a) shared consensus on legitimate methods of conflict resolution between the government and opposition groups." After the beginning of the student movement, each of these two sides, she asserts, "became convinced that the other would no longer abide by the rules of democratic politics. Each side justified its own excesses in the name of safeguarding democracy from the assaults mounted on it by the other."⁵⁴⁴

Taking this confrontation forward as leader of the Bihar movement, JP would emphasise the frontier of separation, to use Laclau's terms, between the people, represented by the student movement, and the state, personified by the Chief Ministers of Gujarat and Bihar and the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The existence of a clear and unbridgeable frontier of separation had already become clear by April 1974. During the previous weeks a war of declarations had developed between JP and the Prime Minister, who insisted on presenting

⁵⁴⁴ Francine R. Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-1977 : The Gradual Revolution* (Princeton ; Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1978), 527. Cited in Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*, 38.

themselves as the leaders of two antagonistic blocs in open dispute. On the one hand, Mrs. Gandhi presented herself as the defender of the nation;⁵⁴⁵ on the other, Jayaprakash was calling for a total revolution that would revitalize democracy in India, snatching power away from the institutions of the State and making democracy “meaningful for the masses.”⁵⁴⁶

It has been argued that this confrontation was not irresolvable, in as much as it represented a conflict between two reconcilable goals: namely, the defence of democracy and the defence of the unity of the nation.⁵⁴⁷ We find this position untenable, especially if the ways in which the JP movement was capable of amassing the amount of political power it did during 1974-1975 are taken into account. In this sense, we are interested in looking at the JP movement as a populist movement, in accordance with Ernesto Laclau’s formulation. In Laclau’s work, populism is not defined as merely a type of movement, but rather as a *logic* used in the process of institution of the social. In his view, such an institution stems as a result of a political logic based on the articulation of heterogeneous social demands and the establishment of a frontier used to identify the other, or the enemy.⁵⁴⁸

In order to properly characterize the popularity of JP’s leadership in 1974, it will be helpful to draw upon Laclau’s discussion of the ways in which the demands used in the institution of the social spread and take shape. According to Laclau, given that any kind of institutional system is inevitably at least partially limiting and frustrating, every society develops “a reservoir of raw anti-status-quo feelings”, which, he argues, can in turn be brought together through anti-status-quo discourses that serve the function of articulating opposing demands in a single chain of equivalence.⁵⁴⁹ Put in different terms, anti-status-quo feelings in every society will generate varied complaints and practices to express discontent, which can in turn be integrated into a broad narrative in which different groups can identify themselves as coming together in a common project

⁵⁴⁵ “Nation’s ideals under attack: P. M.”, *Times of India*, 22 March 1974.

⁵⁴⁶ “J.P. calls for moral revolution”, *Times of India*, 10 April 1974.

⁵⁴⁷ Samaddar, “Jayaprakash Narayan and the Problem of Representative Democracy.”

⁵⁴⁸ Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 117.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

of protest and opposition. Having arrived at this point, it is easy to see JP's favoring of the political culture of *lok niti* during the 1950s and 60s as an attempt to fashion an anti-status-quo discourse capable of acting in opposition to the state and the practice of *raj niti*. As we have seen in previous chapters, JP identified Nehru as the figure that had established *raj niti* as the political culture of the Indian state in the 1950s. This involved, according to Jayaprakash, the betrayal of the radical and emancipatory thrust of early XX century nationalism. As early as September 1973, Indira Gandhi appeared in the eyes of JP as the champion of a system completely subject to *raj niti*, and, as a result, as a figure opposed to the interests of the masses and millions of India:

The prime minister must have realized by now that power—even unchallenged power—is not enough; that personal popularity and charisma are not enough; that thumping electoral victories are not enough; that legislation is not enough; that statization (sic.), miscalled nationalization of vital economic sectors is not enough; that plans are not enough; nor all of them put together are enough. For had it been so, the country's condition would not have been what it is today. If the prime minister has realized all this, she must have asked herself: what is wrong then, what is missing? (The answer is:) Moral authority of the country's political leadership.⁵⁵⁰

If, as I have argued, during the 1950s and 60s, the defining enemy of *lok niti* appeared rendered through the signifiers of the state, its corrupt institutions and its inefficient officials, in the context of a broad popular struggle of 1974-1975, it was the Prime Minister herself who began to be identified as the enemy. Thus, the *Indira Hatao* slogan. On the other hand, and thanks to his long defence of anti-statism and his status as the last standing hero of the freedom movement, Jayaprakash during these years struggles to present himself as a signifier of protest and righteous opposition. Thus, JP and Indira found themselves on opposite sides of a frontier, which, as the summer of 1975 approached, revealed itself as increasingly harder to bridge.

The basic antagonistic logic favoured by JP's leadership and programme of Total Revolution would prove to be of crucial importance to the strategy of the Janata Front political coalition that rallied behind him during 1974-1975. The

⁵⁵⁰ "Row to Check the Canker of Corruption", in *Everyman's*, vol. 1, no. 9, 1 September 1973.

most strident and eloquent example of this appears in the testimony given by Morarji Desai, an old Congressman who held political and personal grudges against Mrs. Gandhi, to the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci in the summer of 1975:

I, thanks to Mrs Gandhi, have discovered that a woman is unsuited to head a government or rule a country. (...) We intend to overthrow her, to force her to resign. For good. The lady won't survive this movement of ours. She won't be able to because it is on a national scale and includes all possible political trends, and even some members of her own party. (...) We are strong, at last, and we've proclaimed a Satyagra (sic.). Satyagra means civil disobedience. It consists in ignoring every prohibition, every law, every arrest, every police attack (...). Thousands of us will surround her house to police attack. (...) Thousands of us will surround her house to prevent her going out or receiving visitors. We'll camp there night and day shouting to her to resign. Even if the police arrest us, beat us up, slaughter us. How many can they slaughter? And what will they do with all the corpses? To prevent such action, Mrs Gandhi has but one course open: to eliminate us all this very night.⁵⁵¹

The situation peaked when, On 12 June 1975, after 18 months of continuous unrest and political instability, Justice Jagmohan Sinha from the Allahabad High Court gave a judgement convicting Indira Gandhi of having indulged in corrupt campaign practices before the 1971 Lok Sabha elections, thus declaring the election void. On that same day, the results of the Gujarat assembly elections, celebrated on 10 June, were also announced: Indira's Congress won 75 seats, while the Janata Front, an alliance formed by members of Congress (O), Jana Sangh, and Morarji Desai's Bharatiya Lok Dal won 78 seats.⁵⁵² Having failed to win a majority, however, the Janata Front soon revealed its open acceptance of the rules of *raj niti*, when its leaders decided to ally with Chimanbhai Patel, whose dismissal had been the initial cause defended by the Gujarat students ever since December 1973.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵¹ Morarji Desai, interviewed by Oriana Fallaci, in "Mrs. Gandhi's Opposition—Morarji Desai", *New Republic*, 9 August, 1975.

⁵⁵² Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on General Election, 1975, to Legislative Assembly of Gujarat, in http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/SE_1975/Statistical%20Report%20Gujarat%201975.pdf, consulted on 3 March April 2015.

⁵⁵³ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*, 65.

In spite of the populist logic behind the articulation of the JP movement, and its spectacular political success, JP himself would not deviate from the logic of *lok niti*. On 15 June JP announced he would go to Bihar to concentrate on the movement for Total Revolution by building *Janata Sarkars*—or people’s governments—in the villages, refusing to come to Delhi to head the opposition against Indira Gandhi. Ever since March, JP had been promoting these *Janata Sarkars*, or people’s government, as the next step in the path of Total Revolution and as the only way of steering popular energy away from the trap of *raj niti*. He described them as a parallel form of government functioning at the village level that would not necessarily interfere or come into conflict with the state government. They would ensure, among other things, the “regular attendance of the village school teachers, get school buildings repaired, laid village roads, and (would have) disputes settled out of court.”⁵⁵⁴ He thought it necessary to take the struggle away from the arena of party politics and made part of the lives of the common people of India.

However, by this moment, the Janata Front had already begun to pursue an independent line of action focused on the toppling of the Prime Minister. The party coalition that took shape in the shadow of JP’s leadership during 1974 and 1975 did not emerge as the result of a long-drawn project of opposition to *raj niti*, but rather as the result of a direct and openly aggressive project of snatching political power away from Mrs. Gandhi and certain sectors of the ruling Congress. From June 1975 onwards, and despite being convinced by his allies to return to Delhi, JP would be eclipsed by the leaders of the Janata Front, especially by Morarji Desai who, in June 1975, emerged as its main and most visible figure. Likewise, during this month, the Janata Front openly presented itself on a platform created by an aggressive programme of Indira Hatao.

6.3 1975: State of Emergency and JP’s Final Fight

In response to the mounting pressures and direct attacks on her person, Indira declared a state of Internal Emergency under Article 352 of the

⁵⁵⁴ “Janata govt in 300 blocks by July: JP”, *Times of India*, 4 May 1975.

Constitution on 26 June 1975. The announcement was followed by the arrest of a large number of people, including Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Asoka Mehta and Charan Singh. As a result, all organized opposition to the government was stifled. In the months that followed, thousands of people were arrested, political power was centralised further around the Prime Minister and her immediate circle, and a clearly discernible attempt was made to set up a new regime of order and discipline based on the increase of social control and the total prohibition of dissidence. In the midst of such a forced neutralisation of political life, the popular support behind the JP movement and Total Revolution dissipated and melted away. However, the leaders of the Janata Front carried on with their plotting behind bars throughout 1976 and formalised the creation of an electoral coalition. On 18 January 1977, the government lifted the Emergency, freeing all political prisoners and announcing the celebration of new elections in March. The Janata Front, that included the participants of the “Indira Hatao” thrust of 1974-1975 plus the Tamil DMK, the CPM and the Akali Dal, was formed two days later, on 20 January.⁵⁵⁵ In the following elections, Janata obtained an overwhelming victory across North India, winning 298 out of a total of 542 seats in the Lok Sabha. The failure of Indira’s Congress in North India was complete. The party failed to obtain a single seat in Bihar, U.P., Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. It won only 1 in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, 4 in Orissa, and 10 in Gujarat.⁵⁵⁶

In the years that followed, Jayaprakash witnessed the investment of Morarji Desai as the first Non-Congress Prime Minister of India and the pinnacle of the power of the Janata government. His personal popularity grew across India—one of his biographies saw three editions between 1977 and 1979⁵⁵⁷—and he seemed to have reached the pinnacle of his fame during the last years of his life. He died in his house in Patna on 8 October 1979, three days before his

⁵⁵⁵ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*, 248.

⁵⁵⁶ Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on General Election, 1977, to the Sixth Lok Sabha, in http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/LS_1977/Vol_I_LS_77.pdf, consulted on 16 April 2015.

⁵⁵⁷ Scarfe, *J.P. His Biography*.

77th birthday and 4 months before the triumphal comeback of Indira Gandhi in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections.

In the following subsection I will argue that during 1974 and 1975, coinciding with JP's last period of imprisonment and his subsequent campaign of support in favour of Janata, his project of *lok niti* underwent a final transformation. During this time, JP's insistence on the need to bend political power according to the will of the people, and on the importance of forming a broad popular movement remained undeterred. However, as a result of the events of the Emergency, JP came to adopt the view that people's power alone could not bring about a true transformation of society; pure people's power, in other words, was not enough. It became clear to him that a selective acceptance of the rules and procedures of *raj niti* had to be indulged in for the sake of a total revolution. In this sense, JP's politics during these crucial years came to be marked by what has been described as an moral antipolitical stance based on the idea that the arena of politics has to be colonized in order to channel it along a new and transformative course.⁵⁵⁸

6.3.1 The final transformation of JP's *lok niti* and the victory of the Janata Front

As we saw above, in the months that followed the climatic events of November 4 1974 in Patna, Jayaprakash announced his intention to devote himself entirely to village work and the construction of *Janata Sarkars* as a way of promoting true people's power and *lok niti*. However, and despite the widespread sympathy for JP and his leadership, during these months popular participation in the Bihar Movement began to wane considerably. This was especially visible in the case of students, the main engine of the protests and JP's favoured audience. As Ghanshyam Shah, an observer of the events of 1974-1975 and author of one of the first major studies of the Bihar and Gujarat movements, pointed out at the time, most of the students that had rallied around JP's leadership during 1974 had, by the turn of 1975, gone back to school and

⁵⁵⁸ Schedler, "Introduction: Antipolitics--Closing and Colonizing the Public Sphere."

dismissed the *Lok Nayak's* exhortation to devote a year to constructive work in the villages.⁵⁵⁹ According to Shah, during the last months of 1974, less than ten per cent of the students in Bihar abstained from attending classes and passing examinations, while entire contingents, namely the bulk of medical and engineering students, had consistently refused to join the movement from its very beginning.⁵⁶⁰ The few students who agreed to go to the villages during 1974 returned disenchanted, and argued that "they did not have any concrete programme for sustained work."⁵⁶¹ Under these circumstances, the development of a full-fledged programme of constructive action and non-cooperation such as had been envisioned by Jayaprakash, was impossible. In the months following the 4 of November, JP would gradually realize that, despite his renewed strength, 1975 would not be a new 1921.

In the following pages it will be shown that the disenchantment generated by the lack of popular voluntarism and the shock caused by Mrs Gandhi's decision to impose a state of emergency led JP to add a final twist to his project of *lok niti* in the months that followed his release from jail and leading to the victory of the Janata Front. This final reformulation involved extending the contours of *lok niti* for the sake of effectiveness by complementing the central aim of people's power with a partial and pragmatic acceptance of the mechanisms and practices or *raj niti*.

Despite the rapid deterioration of his health during his 5 month imprisonment (26 June-11 November 1975), following his release and during the months after the suspension of the state of emergency, Jayaprakash would once again contribute heartily to the campaign of the Janata candidates, especially in defence of Morarji Desai. Apparently, he had gone back to his role as leader of the JP movement. However, there was a big difference: this time he was not promoting Total Revolution, *Sarvodaya* or people's power. This time he was asking for votes. By early 1977 then, JP appears to have once again caved in to

⁵⁵⁹ Ghanshyam Shah, *Protest Movements in Two Indian States : A Study of the Gujarat and Bihar Movements* (Delhi: Ajanta publications, 1977).

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 116.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 122.

the practice of electioneering he had so harshly criticised during the past twenty-five years. This can be explained, I will argue, by thinking of this last stage of JP's political career as a final attempt to promote a moral antipolitical stance focused on the "conquest" and "colonization"⁵⁶² of politics for the sake of its purification and regeneration.

The first signs of this reformulation of *lok niti* appear in Jayaprakash's prison diary kept between July and November 1975. In an entry dated August 21, he states that the student movements of Gujarat and Bihar had been a "general people's struggle for comprehensive social change" that called for the active involvement of political parties of the opposition. Further, he elaborates that, as an important leader of the movement, his primary interest had been to bring together this people's struggle and the opposition parties for the sake of breaking "the Congress monopoly of power at the Centre" and the creation of a "new government (that) would help and participate in the revolutionary movement."⁵⁶³ It is clear that, with regards to its basic force—people's power—and its final objectives—opposition to despotic power and total revolution—*lok niti* remained the frame for JP's politics. However, he was now making clear his desire to extend its range of action through the inclusion of the institutional arm of opposition political parties.

The prevailing culture of *raj niti* was not only at the root of the degradation of political life. It was also promoting a harmful alienation that stemmed from its use of the "common people" not as agents of change and transformation, but merely as "workers and consumers".⁵⁶⁴ For these reasons, the stakes were so high that shrinking away from the responsibility of shaping a united front of opposition and protest would have constituted a "political crime".⁵⁶⁵ Thus, JP now posed that the programme of *lok niti* had to be extended even at the cost of renouncing its fundamental stance in rejection of institutional politics, which he

⁵⁶² Schedler, "Introduction: Antipolitics--Closing and Colonizing the Public Sphere."

⁵⁶³ *Prison Diary*, 21 August 1975, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. X (1972-1979), 494-95.

⁵⁶⁴ August 23, in *ibid.*, 499.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 498.

had defended for more than two decades. He justified this new position by stating that:

(T)he ideal never gets translated into practice without suffering some deterioration. (...) (I)t is just not possible to keep political parties from coming into an open mass movement. (...) True, if the movement had been confined to the *Sarvodaya* workers alone (...) it would have been possible to keep (the parties away). But, then, there would have been no people's movement.⁵⁶⁶

In pursuing the goal of garnering true people's power, it was impossible to remain distant from *raj niti*. In this sense, the old JP was accepting the impossibility of a people's movement completely detached from institutions and parties. A true revolution, he now proclaimed, could only emerge if these institutions were placed at the service of people's struggle and purified by the effect of people's power:

Is the participation of Opposition (sic.) parties (in the people's struggle) an unmixed evil? My unhesitating answer is: No. Its first result, too obvious to be argued, is that it lends strength to the movement. But the more important thing is that the parties undergo a sea-change (sic.) in the process. (...) (I)n Bihar it has happened. All the parties involved are committed to the aims of total revolution and to the dynamics of change (and) struggle. (...) I hope the baptism of fire through which the Opposition has passed and is passing in Bihar would have steeled their commitment to total revolution. I admit that if God removes me from the scene before then, this will only remain a dream. But the experience will not have been lost and later someone else will come forward to pick-up the thread.⁵⁶⁷

His reference to a "baptism of fire" denotes his investment in the prospect of reclaiming politics from immorality and purifying it for the sake of a revolution that would result, following the precepts of early XX century radicalism, in the coming of true *swaraj*. In May 1976, JP declared his hopes for the emergence of a new unified party of opposition that would be able to colonize politics in India and purify it through an open reliance on people's power, a defence of true *swaraj*, and the inclusion of a programme capable of going beyond the petty interests of power politics:

⁵⁶⁶ September 6, in *ibid.*, 522.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 524.

My hopes for the new party, I should say are as high as the skies. (...) The New party should be a people's party and therefore I expect that unlike the existing parties, most of its leaders, workers and members should be drawn from the countryside. They should maintain contact with the people and spend time in the rural areas. (...) (T)he New party should be an educator of the people. It should draw its strength from the people and its programme of action should be a mix of parliamentary works plus people's action which might involve civil disobedience on local issues and so on. I should expect the New party not to confine itself merely to politics but to broaden out and cover as much field as possible such as the field of education, economic development, problems of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, etc.⁵⁶⁸

During the remaining months of 1976 and early weeks of 1977, he would defend the position that it was possible to colonize and purify the realm of power politics through an instrumental use of the party system, qualified by its subjection to the teleology of *swaraj* and the primacy of people's power. As the time for the elections came near, his position gradually became clearly tied to the fortunes of the Janata Front. As we argued in the previous section, by that time JP had begun to accuse Indira Gandhi of being the main defender and stalwart of a system bent on the negation of this ideal of *swaraj* and as the perpetrator of a dramatic degradation of public life. As a result, JP's defence of the Janata Front was as much fuelled by his newfound conviction that parties could constitute vehicle for people's power, as by his outright rejection of the Prime Minister.

6.4 The last days of JP

6.4.1 Jayaprakash, the JP Movement and the transformation of Hindu nationalist forces

On November 3, 1977, less than a year after the triumph of the Janata coalition and less than two years before his death, Jayaprakash addressed a group of volunteers at the RSS training camp in Patna. During his speech, JP expressed the "great expectations" he held for the potentialities of the RSS, which he described as a "revolutionary

⁵⁶⁸ Expectations from the New Party, Bombay 15 May 1976, in *ibid.*, 585.

organisation which ha(d) taken up the challenge of creating a new Bharat”.

He expressed himself in the following way:

Friends, I am overwhelmed when I think of the conditions prevailing in the country. I know that I don't have many days left. I am living on borrowed time, and am on the brink of death. Even then I am determined to serve my country, my society, my people and the poor and the miserable of the land to the last ounce of my energy and the last breath in my body. I commend to you the ideals of service, renunciation and sacrifice. I have no doubt that you are already imbued with these ideals and are of self-sacrificing nature and noble conduct. Here is a vast country open to you. You can accomplish a lot. May God give you strength and may you live up to such expectations.⁵⁶⁹

JP's involvement with the RSS had grown during the years leading to the declaration of the Emergency, which, I have argued, must be seen as the moment of the final transformation of JP's *lok niti* in favour of a qualified acceptance of political parties as recipients of the thrust of people's power and the period of culmination of his career of protest and opposition. In this declaration it is possible to see that in 1977 JP approached the RSS not only in terms of a political partnership, but also of a deeper affinity of principle.

Throughout his life, Jayaprakash defended different brands of revolution—from the socialist utopia to Gandhian *Sarvodaya* passing through the dream of national emancipation—and brought them together through his devotion to protest and *lok niti*. However, by 1977, the old and tired man that appears on the pictures of Janata victory sitting on a wheelchair, slouching his shoulders next to Morarji Desai looks less like the combative symbol of a bygone era of political devotion and struggle than as one additional player many in the universe of party opposition and power politics.⁵⁷⁰ In April of 1977, following the suspension of the Emergency, JP hailed the victory of Janata as the triumph of “the student's and people's movement that had started from Gujarat and spread to Bihar” in 1974.⁵⁷¹ However, shortly after he began to deplore the Janata leaders' swift abandonment of the programme of Total Revolution and the lack of attention

⁵⁶⁹ Jayaprakash Narayan, "J.P.'S Call to R.S.S.," (Bangalore: Jagarana Prakashana, 1979), 5-8.

⁵⁷⁰ See Appendix C.

⁵⁷¹ Message to the Nation, New Delhi, broadcast on AIR on 13 April 1977, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. X (1972-1979), 650.

given to his opinion on matters of national transformation.⁵⁷² Moreover, during the summer of 1977, Jayaprakash declared that he was “losing interest” in politics and feeling increasingly “distant” from those in the new government.⁵⁷³

As the year 1977 drew to a close the leaders of the new government ceased completely to take JP’s opinion into account, and his status as a political figure was radically diminished in the light of the party’s internal bickering. At the same time, since the broad movement of protest that had preceded the Emergency subsided across North India, the absence of political gatherings prevented JP from promoting his ideas before crowds or large audiences. All of these factors, along with the already mentioned absence of a substantial number of volunteers for his constructive work initiatives relegated the JP to the background of the post-Janata political horizon.

As a result, JP’s sustained defence of radical transformation had, by mid 1977, been relegated to playing the role of a mere symbolic reference and a lost cause. Distanced from younger socialist circles, disenchanted with *Bhoodan*, ignored by the leaders of Janata and disregarded by students and younger activists, the old JP saw no one who would carry on with the task of revolution and *swaraj* in India.

Seen in this context, JP’s address at the RSS training camp in November 1977 is important for an assessment of the impact of his thought and career would have in later years. Beyond the relevance of the success of the Janata coalition, JP’s greatest heritage can be found in the ways in which he contributed to the creation of a space for non-statist action, focused on the society and its transformation, which would be central for the political transformations in India during the decades following his death. At the same time, as we will see below, his leadership would contribute, paradoxically but decisively, to the institutional consolidation of the BJP.

⁵⁷² Interview with *Samachar*, Patna, 14 August, 1977, JP papers, NMML. And “The Task Ahead: Conversations with Bimal Prasad”, 28-30 August 1977, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. X (1972-1979), 676-90.

⁵⁷³ “No one seeks my advice”: Interview with the correspondents of *Sunday*, Surendra Pratap Singh and Shobha Kilachand, 14 August 1977, vol. 5, no. 22, pp 12-15.

In chapter 4, I outlined the affinities between JP's defence of *lok niti* and the programme of the RSS during the early decades following independence in India. These were defined by a common espousal of constructive work and a rejection of the institutions of the state and power politics, as well as a conviction of the importance of challenging what has been called the "dominant Nehruvian social compact"⁵⁷⁴ during the 1950s and 60s. Moreover, I suggested that these affinities stemmed from the fact that both the RSS and JP's political devotion can be seen as products of the radical thrust of early XX century nationalism, and as sharing a common set of concerns regarding political practice and social transformation.

Despite not being acknowledged by either side, the closeness generated by these affinities between JP and the RSS would be deepened further by the parallel trajectories of their respective politics during the 1950s and 60s. Openly dismissive of "power politics" and the Nehruvian state, both JP and the RSS devoted their energies during these decades entirely to the promotion of constructive work and the creation of non-statist organizations and movements. This proximity would become evident during the student agitation of 1974-1975, when the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarti Parishad joined the JP movement and Jayaprakash himself received the outspoken support of the RSS leader Balasaheb Deoras.⁵⁷⁵ At the height of the anti-government agitations of 1975, Jayaprakash himself would declare the goals of the Bihar movement and the RSS to be "fundamentally the same" inasmuch as both "aimed at complete change in the entire society through a process of evolution in thoughts and actions of the people for the betterment of the whole nation."⁵⁷⁶

From an experiential perspective, it is possible to imagine that, feeling like the last and lonely survivor of the generation of 1921, JP saw in the RSS and its defence of *bharatiya* principles and emphasis on constructive work one of the last surviving instances of the thrust and goals of early XX *swadeshi* nationalism.

⁵⁷⁴ This expression is taken from the arguments developed in Ray and Katzenstein, "Introduction. In the Beginning There Was the Nehruvian State," 8.

⁵⁷⁵ Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism : A Reader*, 177.

⁵⁷⁶ Speech delivered to *swayamsevak*s at an RSS training camp in Calicut, *National Herald*, 18 May 1975.

On the other hand, it can be argued that, despite the opportunism involved in their decision, the support given by factions of the RSS to the JP movement was fuelled by the organisation's acknowledgement of the importance of JP's devotion to constructive work and anti-statist stances.⁵⁷⁷ Writing in 1980, just one year after JP's death, a historian of the RSS clarified the organisation's recognition of the *Lok Nayak* as a model for dispassionate and disinterested constructive work in the following terms:

The RSS attitude to politics continues to be the same as it was fifty years ago. It is not in politics; and it is not after power(...). The RSS is engaged in the task of character-building and nation-building. It is, therefore, very much interested in the country's problems. It ponders deep over these problems and gives its dispassionate and disinterested opinion from time to time. This is in conformity with the ancient Indian tradition going back to Vyas and Vasisht. In more recent times, Swami Ramdas acted as the mentor of Shivaji. In modern times Gandhiji played this role for the national movement—and Jayaprakash for Janata movement.⁵⁷⁸

It is clear that, despite earlier disagreements caused by divergent ideological inclinations, by the late 1970s JP and the RSS were in agreement with regards to their anti-statist and antipolitical stances. At the same time, during these years, both forces acted together in defence of a common thrust of protest directed against the bearers and defendants of power politics and the Indian state.

Moreover, it is important to clarify that the importance of JP for the transformation and consolidation of Hindu nationalist forces after 1975 would go beyond these ideological affinities and political alliances with the RSS. As a result of the participation of the Jana Sangh in the Janata coalition, many members who could not resign themselves to questioning their affiliation with the RSS left the Jana Sangh.⁵⁷⁹ This initial moment of dilution of the Jana Sangh's adherence to the doctrine of Hindu nationalism would be taken forward after the

⁵⁷⁷ The conjunction of the principles of the RSS and JP during the 1970s has been acknowledged by scholars of the period, including R. G. Fox, "Gandhian Socialism and Hindu Nationalism: Cultural Domination in the World System," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 25, no. 3 (1987); Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics. 1925 to the 1990s*. (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999).

⁵⁷⁸ K. R. Malkani, *The Rss Story* (New Delhi: Impex India, 1980), 20.

⁵⁷⁹ Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism : A Reader*, 178.

creation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980, the party meant to act as heir to the failed Janata Party under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In the inaugural “Statement of Commitment” of the BJP, published in 1980, it was stated that the party’s ideology “would be, broadly speaking, that of Gandhian socialism”⁵⁸⁰, which was precisely the tag used during the 1980s to encapsulate JP’s political stance. Despite the fact that the BJP would make an effort to come close to the RSS again after L. K. Advani replaced Vajpayee as party president in 1986, the fact remains that the involvement of the Hindu right in the JP movement would be crucial for the transformation of the forces of Hindu nationalism. The coming together of Hindu nationalist factions and the leadership of JP resulting in the parting of Jana Sangh members away from the RSS, and in this way, contributed to the creation of the BJP, one of the central political forces in India during the last three decades.

6.4.2 A world in shambles

In spite of his important role as a popular leader in the 1974-1975 movement of protest, and of his status as one of the last remaining members of the freedom movement, JP was swiftly turned into a mere symbolic figure by the figures involved in the new power struggle inside the Janata government. In this sense, JP began to be used as a symbol for the recovery of Gandhian ideals and as little more than a decorative figure for the new party. Jayaprakash openly dismissed those who instrumentally referred to him as the “Mahatma of 1977” and “the father of the second liberation”,⁵⁸¹ and reasserted his belief in a virtuous politics, the ideals of socialism and the prospects for *sarvodaya* over the interests of any political party or institution.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ Partha S. Ghosh, *Bjp and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism : From Periphery to Centre* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1999), 280.

⁵⁸¹ “No one seeks my advice...”, p. 12.

⁵⁸² In a famous photograph taken by Raghu Rai in 1977, the effort to portray the old Jayaprakash as a Gandhi-like figure giving advice to the Nehru-impersonating Morarji Desai allows us a clear example of the ways in which the Janata government used the image of JP as a way of promoting the party’s legitimacy. However, this appeal to JP’s symbolic importance was not matched by a consistent engagement with his programme of Total Revolution and *lok niti*. See appendix D.

A few months later, in March 1978, Jayaprakash's total disenchantment with the Janata government and his anxiety regarding the prospect of a true transformation in India were evident. Despite his insistence on the intrinsic oppositional value of the "political synthesis and the political will that (had given) birth to the Janata Party", JP bemoaned that the failure of the party was the result of its inability and unwillingness to rally "the support of and mobilize to constructive action, the youth and student power"⁵⁸³ of India. In this sense, he was accusing the Janata government of betraying the thrust of *lok niti*, which had been at the core of the popular movement of 1974-1975 that had opened the doors of power to the party. Although remaining active and lucid until his death, it is clear that by 1978 Jayaprakash Narayan was distant not only from national politics but also increasingly disenchanted, uneasy and anxious regarding the prospects of *lok niti*.

In the horizon of post-Emergency politics in India—defined by the growing importance of the middle class as a proxy for state reason⁵⁸⁴ and the predominance of the language of community and communalism—JP's devotion to protest cannot but appear as a pitiful anachronism standing in the way of economic progress and social order. Perhaps he was quick to perceive such a change. Drawing upon the work of David Scott, post-Emergency India appeared for JP as a political world redefined in a new jargon, one that "no longer admitted the legibility, much less recognized the legitimacy" of his life-long political ideals.⁵⁸⁵ The language of moral and political vision and hope through which JP had coded his political imagination were out of sync with the world they were meant to describe and criticize. It is seen from this angle that his famous lament takes on a full meaning:

My world lies in shambles all around me. I am afraid I shall not see
it put together again in my lifetime.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸³ Message on the first Anniversary of Janata Party's Victory, Patna, 23 March 1978, JP Papers, NMML.

⁵⁸⁴ Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics after Television : Religious Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Indian Public* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1012.

⁵⁸⁵ Scott, *Omens of Adversity. Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice.*, 5.

⁵⁸⁶ "Prison Diary", 1975, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. X (1972-1979), 473.

During his last years, between the end of the Emergency and his death, the old JP, exhausted and sick, appears as a perfect example of what David Scott has described as “a leftover from a former future stranded in the present.”⁵⁸⁷ The defence of Total Revolution was the last stance of revolutionary projects animated by the radical thrust of early XX century nationalism, with its faith in the multitude, its rebellion against the alienation caused by modern socio-political formations, and its rejection of pragmatic, bureaucratic power. Most of his pronouncements between December 1975 and his death present us with continual bemoaning of the institutionalization of corruption and the need to support the Janata coalition. Perhaps even he remained unclear about the implications of the changes that had taken place around him. As a way of providing closure, it may be best to read a poem written in 1975, in which JP hints at the impossibility of admitting his failure, and renovates his belief in the younger generations to bring about true change:

Life is full of failures.
Whenever success came near,
It was pushed away from my path.

Was it foolishness then?

No.
My definitions of success and failure
Have been different.

Ask history whether years before
I could not have become Prime Minister.
Some other paths were acceptable, worth pursuing,
Paths of sacrifice, of service, of construction,
Paths of struggle, of Total Revolution.

I do not have to stop anywhere
Whatever the difficulties on the way.
I have no personal desire.
All is dedicated to God.

So am satisfied with my failures,
And this unsuccessful life will be blessed a hundred times

⁵⁸⁷ Scott, *Omens of Adversity. Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice.*, 5.

If it succeeds in making a bit smoother
The thornful path of the dear youth
Pursuing a similar objective.⁵⁸⁸

6.4 Conclusions

The 1970s were not only the last decade of JP's life. They also brought, as I have argued above, the peak and consolidation of what he described as the political culture of *raj niti*, marked by an emphasis on the importance of political power for the mere sake of power, a lack of interest and empathy for the needs and potency of the people, the centralization of power and decision-making and the rejection of popular mobilization and direct action. As a result, in JP's view this decade culminated the betrayal of the original virtuous thrust of the freedom movement and the ideals of early XX Century radical nationalism. At the same time, the 1970s also witnessed the widespread movement of protest across North India against the policies of socioeconomic development defended by the state and against the government of Indira Gandhi. As part of this general process of unrest, a widespread opposition was spearheaded by the student movement in Gujarat and Bihar, which JP welcomed as the opportunity to re-enact the radical thrust of *swadeshi* and Non-Cooperation, and conceived of as the culmination of the project of *lok niti* he had promoted since the early 1950s. In this sense, as we argued in the initial chapters of this dissertation, Jayaprakash must be seen not only as one of the last stalwarts of the freedom movement, but also, and more importantly, as one of the most relevant promoters of post-*swadeshi* radicalism in contemporary India. At the same time, we have argued that this radicalism, focused as it was on the virtues of constructive work and the rejection of power politics, brought JP close to the principles and practice of the RSS, as is shown by his closeness with the group during the 1974-1975 agitations as well as during the last years of his life.

⁵⁸⁸ "Prison Diary", 9 September 1975, original in Hindi, translation by Bimal Prasad, in Prasad, *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*, vol. X (1972-1979), 526.

In this chapter, we have shown that JP's programme of Total Revolution, which was adopted as the programme of action of the Bihar Movement, presented a polished version of the antipolitical stances and populist logic the *Lok Nayak* had defended throughout his life and had, since the early 1950s, identified with the project of *lok niti*. However, in view of the increasingly repressive response of the Indian state and his growing conviction that the path to transformation involved the removal of Mrs. Gandhi, in 1975 JP introduced a final twist to his programme, favouring a partial acceptance of the rules of *raj niti* for the sake of the promotion of people's power. As a result, he gave his support for the leaders and party platform of the Janata Front, contributing in great measure to the latter's electoral victory of 1977. In turn, the failure of the Janata government in 1979 would bring the discredit of JP's as a symbol of protest and opposition and of his project of *lok niti*. For this reason, and despite the enormous success of his leadership in 1974-1975, following 1977 Jayaprakash would be relegated to the background of Indian politics, destined to remain a mere symbolic figure defending an anachronistic programme.

This notwithstanding, the Janata victory and the undeniable impact of JP's leadership during the 1970s would contribute in great measure to the transformation of the political horizon of India in the following three decades, a period marked by the mounting importance of the language of communalism and community. In this sense, I have signalled at the importance of taking into account the ways in which his leadership contributed both to the consolidation of the BJP, a party which in many ways represents the institutionalization of the thrust of Hindu nationalism, and to the crystallization of a space for non-statist action, focused on the society, which would be central for the political transformations in India during the decades following his death. It is within this space that important currents and groups, associated with Hindu nationalism, but also with the ensemble of forces grouped under the label of new social movements and post ideological political groupings like the Aam Aadmi Party, were to develop in more recent decades.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Shifting landscapes of protest: the legacies of Jayaprakash and the actuality of lok niti

In 1902 the village of Sitabdiara, where Jayaprakash Narayan was born, was located at the confluence of the Ganga and Ghaghra rivers, on Bihar's border with what was then the United Provinces. With the passing of the years, the shifting courses of both rivers gradually eroded the soil around the village, forcing the dwellers of Sitabdiara to move to the opposite bank. This resulted in the relocation of the entire village. In one of the *Lok Nayak's* biographies published in 1975, we are told that JP managed to rescue the original beams of the house he had been born in and had later used them to build a new one in the new Sitabdiara, now located in Ballia District, Uttar Pradesh.⁵⁸⁹ Despite owning a house in Patna, where he spent most of his adult life, the shifting rivers of North India had turned him into a resident of UP, instead of Bihar.

This anecdote concerning JP's migrating place of origin can serve as a metaphor for the indefinability and malleability of JP's trajectory, as well as of the flexibility, openness and hidden consistency of his thought. At different times, he appears as a politician, party leader, intellectual, revolutionary, moralist or ideologue. Stretching more than half a century, JP's political career, like his two houses in the two Sitabdiaras, seems to lack a single foundation. In its origin, his career was marked by its initial moment of devotion to the revolutionary event of the Non-Cooperation Movement, which he saw as the culmination of the mounting radical thrust of early XX Century anticolonial nationalism. During the 1930s and 40s, in the years prior to the transfer of power, JP brandished a vision of socialism as a politics of and for the people, and a leftist programme of opposition against the colonial state and in favour of revolutionary anticolonial action. In the years following the creation of the national state, and until the climatic agitations of the 1970s, he defended the ideal of *sarvodaya* as true people's socialism and promoted a political project based on a moral vision in

⁵⁸⁹ Bhattacharjea, *Jayaprakash Narayan : A Political Biography*, 37.

favour of the recovery of the community, the rejection of materialism and the state, the transformation of the individual and the purification of politics. Ultimately, in the 1970s, he attenuated his open rejection of institutional politics and advocated for the coming together of party organizations with the wide people's movement for the sake of a truly revolutionary change.

However, like the beams he moved from one side of the river to the other when his village was relocated, important continuities and immovable principles guided his actions through the decades despite the apparently contradictory variety of practices and goals. As I have argued in this work, the core of his changing politics remained defined by the continuous search for new forms and programmes of protest in the face of power. Moreover, I have posed that JP's life-long political engagement with the politics of protest and emancipation should be decoded through the logic of a political culture he identified with *lok niti*, a formula that embraces diverse ideals, practices and political strands of opposition brought together by a common aversion to and rejection of "power-politics" or *raj niti*. Through our analysis of its evolution and different manifestations, I have established that *lok niti* was an expression of a protest that was not directed at politics per se, but at its vilification. Following John Foran's definition, I have characterized *lok niti* as a political culture that brought together the teleology of *swaraj*, the thrust of early XX century radicalism that culminated in the moral ethos and revolutionary techniques brandished by Gandhi after 1919, and the socialist ideal of a society free of exploitation and alienation, which was interpreted via a positive reassessment of Indian civilization and moral conduct as the remedy for the dehumanizing thrust of industrial modernity, western colonialism and the despotic colonial state.

As is clear from its origins in the midst of early XX century radical nationalist mobilization and its development during the critical decades of the transfer of power and the establishment of the national state in India, JP's *lok niti* represents a political culture defined by its openness to different and contradictory strands and modes of participation. This is especially relevant regarding those that in recent decades have been grouped under the analytical

category of antipolitics, and which are linked to anarchist and pluralist conceptions of sovereignty and moral conceptions of political power and participation. This political culture, it has been shown, emerged and evolved in strict opposition to established and institutionalized forms of power. This included the colonial state as well as the postcolonial regime, which were seen as intrinsically coercive and alienating. In this sense, it adheres to Ernesto Laclau's formulation of populism. Finally, through an analysis of JP's interaction with and response to contemporary defendants of socialism and revolution in India, I posited that *lok niti* was at once both revolutionary, inasmuch as it aimed at the radical transformation of socio-political reality, and conservative in its concerns regarding its defence of the community and its opposition to social and economic programmes of modernization that implied the destruction of traditional structures of thought and social organization.

The primary aims of JP's *lok niti* were freedom—first from colonial rule and later on from all kinds of alienating institutional constraints—and the promotion of early XX century articulations of *swaraj* as autonomy. Concerns like equality and progress, which were crucial for figures like Rammanohar Lohia and Jawaharlal Nehru, were of secondary importance for JP and hence for his project of *lok niti*. In this sense, JP's thought appears in tune with some of the most important philosophical movement and countercultural ideals of the mid twentieth century, like those defended by the members of the Beat generation, adherents of existentialism and defendants of critical theory. In its defence of these complementing goals—freedom and autonomy—JP's *lok niti* participated of the emancipatory thrust of early socialism, guided by the concern with the alienation caused by modern industrial civilization, and of Gandhi's thought, marked by a heightened concern with morality over instrumental political action and the belief in the intrinsic immorality of modern civilization. Jayaprakash brought both of these universes together through the promotion of anti-statism, the defence of the community and the elevation of voluntary service, direct action and self-sacrifice to the uppermost pedestal of political praxis.

An important underlying theme of this work has been that the evolution of Jayaprakash's *lok niti* and personal devotion to protest can serve us to identify the origins, climax and legacies of a definite cycle in the life of practices and projects of protest and emancipation in India. This was a cycle marked by the transit from a political horizon coloured by the prospect of a national emancipation and a revolutionary emphasis on social transformation through the state, to one of post-ideological politics based essentially on the potency of protest and opposition. In this sense, it is not a coincidence that the careers of many relevant and ideologically contrasting political figures of the last few decades in India—like A. B. Vajpayee, Laloo Prasad Yadav, Nitish Kumar, V. P. Singh and Narendra Modi—are linked to the possibilities of opposition and spaces of protest and organization generated by JP's leadership and promotion of *lok niti*.

Moreover, JP's changing thought and political philosophy can be seen as having anticipated and contributed to a broader move away from older ideological divides and established political practices in India, fuelled by the emergence of various dissenting groups and voices that from the 1970s onwards struggled for a redefinition of the field of politics and the diminishment of state legitimacy and power. This was a process that became discernible during a period that, as we saw in the last chapter of this dissertation, represented the high peak of for JP's career of opposition and protest. It is significant that these years were also marked by the emergence of the diverse forces grouped under the label of the new social movements in India, which focused on challenging the state and established models of development, as well as on the promotion of social participation and the importance of people's concerns. Likewise, JP's consistent promotion of anti-statist politics up to the 1970s must be seen as an important contribution to the process of growth, after the 1980s, of the strength and popularity of the religious nationalism of the RSS and the BJP, focused as this was on the sphere of society and the outspoken rejection of the driving values of the Nehruvian project.

Another clear example of the continued relevance of JP's *lok niti* in the arena of Indian politics can be found in the rise of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) since 2011. Looked at closely, the agitation in favour of the establishment of an effective machinery to curb corruption in the government and the bureaucracy led by Indian Against Corruption and Anna Hazare, as well as the subsequent stances of the AAP, appear to clearly replicate many of *lok niti*'s central antipolitical tenets, premises and goals. This is most evident in the AAP's rhetorical defence of the view that politicians tend to be more corrupt than the rest of society, its excessive reliance on mobilisation in detriment of a defined agenda, its defence of popular sovereignty⁵⁹⁰, and the objective of striving for a people-based political practice capable of overcoming the harmful effects of the centralization of power and the mismanagement caused by the low moral standards of the ruling classes in India.⁵⁹¹ In more general terms, the AAP has also been vocal in its defence of a practice devoted to the mobilization of the masses, and the defence of *swaraj* as the final goal of politics.⁵⁹² One of its ideologues has claimed that the AAP's "announced priorities include checking Corruption (sic.), reversing centralisation of power, challenging discourses of power based on caste, region and religion, and putting an end to crony capitalism patronised by the major political parties."⁵⁹³ From all of this, the programme of the AAP can be seen as a renewed version of *lok niti*, adapted for the aftermath of the Mandal-Mandir-Market era of the 1990s.

For all these reasons, Jayaprakash Narayan's lifelong involvement with the ideal, possibilities and shortcomings of *lok niti* or people's politics provides us a window through which it is possible to observe and think about the major political transformations of the XX century in India, from the radical mobilizations of anticolonial nationalism during its early decades to the rise of Hindu nationalism and post-ideological movements which marked its final years.

⁵⁹⁰ Manash Bhattacharjee, "Aam Aadmi Party: Government of the Governed?," *Economic and Political Weekly* XLVIII, no. 52 (2014).

⁵⁹¹ For an exposition of the Aam Aadmi Party's programme and platform, see Anand Kumar, "A Constructive Challenge to the Political Class: The Aam Aadmi's Party," *ibid.* 48, no. 07 (2013).

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 15. And Kejriwal, *Swaraj*.

⁵⁹³ Kumar, "A Constructive Challenge to the Political Class: The Aam Aadmi's Party," 11.

In a wider context, JP's *lok niti* can also be seen as an early example of the sensibilities of protest that would become important across the globe following the 1970s. These have been defended by disparate initiatives and movements of protest born out of the popular disenchantment with representative institutions of the state and the increasing demands for horizontality, decentralization and popular empowerment. In the North Atlantic World, these movements have been grouped together by the ideals of Anti-globalization and resistance to neoliberal capitalism. On the other hand, in the erstwhile Third World, these have been part of a new landscape of protest marked by efforts to move beyond old Marxist frames and introduce new causes, subjects and arenas of protest, emancipation and revolution, including, among others, movements of indigenous and tribal peoples protesting displacement, contingents opposing models of capitalist development based on dispossession and the destruction of habitats and livelihoods, and movements against authoritarian state or corporative action.⁵⁹⁴

7.2 Jayaprakash the protestor and Indian democracy

In his study of the art of moral protest, James Jasper draws on the importance of social character types developed in the work of the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre in order to pose the importance of protestors for modern societies. MacIntyre defines character types as persons whose professional activity, daily routines, personalities and characters fuse in a way that make them moral representations of definite cultural ideals. In the case of character types, identity fuses with occupation to such a degree that they are capable of expressing a cultural ideal and morally legitimate a mode of social existence. The artist, for example, expresses its inner self; the manager instrumentally maximizes the goals and resource of organizations; and the therapist assists

⁵⁹⁴ Rao, *Third World Protest : Between Home and the World*.

individuals realize their potential.⁵⁹⁵ Building on these ideas, Jasper puts forth the existence of a protestor character type, defined by the effort to fit his life to a set of convictions that serve the purpose of promoting novel ways of living, and new ways of applying moral visions for the sake of endowing social and individual lives with meaning in the face of power. Jasper argues that the protestor type, despite often being “caricatured as naïve, admired as compassionate, dismissed as kooky”, makes important contributions to every society through the ways in which they tackle deep moral questions such as: how should we live our lives; what are our moral responsibilities, and to whom? Whether or not their answers are agreeable to others around him, protestors encourage them to shake down their belief systems and for the sake of rethinking and interrogating established intuitions and principles.⁵⁹⁶

In the preceding chapters I have shown that JP’s life was guided by his devotion to protest and the effort to disseminate the moral visions and perspectives borne from its practice and theory. As a result of his devotion to protest and his participation in the most important moments of radical change in India’s XXth Century—from Non-Cooperation to the JP Movement—Jayaprakash Narayan must be seen as the paradigmatic protestor type in India’s XX century. Moreover, the political culture of *lok niti* cannot be seen merely as an original *creation* of JP’s, but rather as the result of his efforts to garner the radical energies and revolutionary ideals present in Indian politics for the sake of a purifying and virtuous practice of protest. For this reason, it is clear that his involvement with and relevance for ideologically disparate groups—from political parties to NGO workers, social activists and *sarvodaya* volunteers—and currents of thought—ranging from orthodox Marxism to Hindu nationalism—does not represent an inconsistency of his thought, but must instead be seen as a sign of its puissance and intrinsic flexibility.

⁵⁹⁵ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 26-29.

⁵⁹⁶ Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest : Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements*, 339-80.

In this concluding section, it is necessary to make a final comment on the role and place of *lok niti* protest in the context of Indian democracy. In the introduction to this dissertation, I posed that the importance to *lok niti* of currents of thought, modes of organization and political claims that are neither completely secular nor entirely modern generated an uncomfortable friction with the normative statist discourse of democracy and modernization defended by the Indian state since the 1950s. This is emphasized by the fact that, as we have seen, the explicit objective of *lok niti* is not the promotion of democracy, but rather the promotion of an ethical opposition to power and a moral approach to politics.

Despite this friction, however, the defence of the tenets and practices of *lok niti*, visible across different circles and levels of politics in India, indeed presents an important legitimating force for the project of democracy. On one hand, *lok niti* contributes to India's democracy's capacities of managing and responding to protest and radical opposition in a way that does not endanger its stability and reproduction. On the other, *lok niti* presents a meaningful ethical and non-institutional counterbalance to political power. This is the result of the fact that the authority of *lok niti* rests entirely on moral grounds and appeals to the ideal of an ethical polity defended by figures like Gandhi and widely recognized as valid across class, caste, regional and linguistic lines. In this sense, and despite its different forms, *lok niti* is based on the validity and immense popular appeal in India of different sources of power acting in society and complementing the power of the political sphere and the state. Moreover, it can only exist and thrive in a context defined by a widespread popular ambiguity regarding the legitimacy of the state, such as the one promoted by *swadeshi* social reformers and nationalists in India, and vehemently defended by Mahatma Gandhi and his followers. JP clearly understood this, and exploited it as the driving force of his politics of protest. In the process, he forcefully defended a mode of social existence based on the continuous interpellation of authority, the unending questioning of power and the promotion of moral political action for the sake of social emancipation in XX century India.

Appendix A



Jayaprakash after receiving a blow during the *lathi* charge undertaken by police forces against protesters in Patna, 4 November 1975.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁷ In Bhattacharjea, *Jayaprakash Narayan : A Political Biography*.

Appendix B



Jayaprakash Narayan addressing the rally of 6 March 1975, in Delhi.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁸ In Masani, *Jp, Mission Partly Accomplished*.

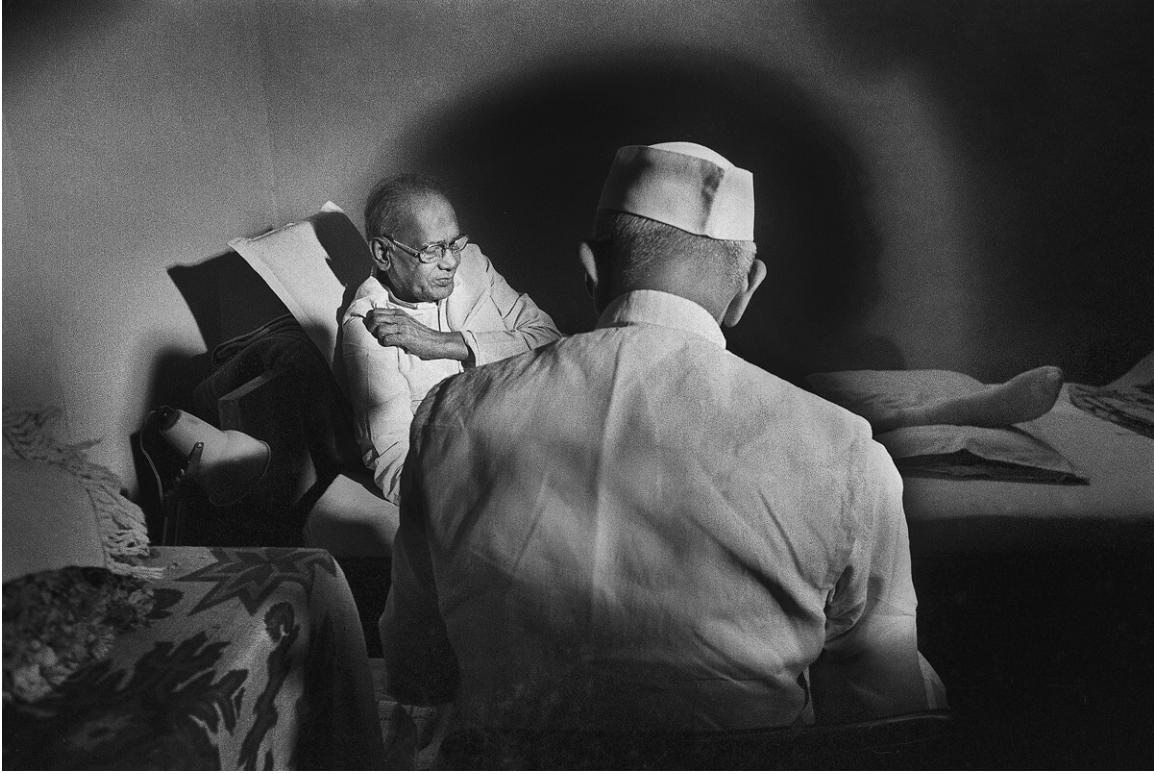
Appendix C



Jayaprakash administering the pledge to members of Janata at Rajghat, before taking office, 24 March 1977.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁹ In *ibid.*

Appendix D



JP and Morarji Desai in 1977.⁶⁰⁰

⁶⁰⁰ Picture by Raghu Rai, in Raghu Rai and Sunanda K. Datta-Ray, *Bihar Shows the Way* (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications, 1977).

Bibliography

ARCHIVES

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

- Jayaprakash Narayan Papers
- Brahmanand Papers

Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge: Oral History Collection (CSAS, OHC)

- Narayan, J.P, interviewed by Arun Gandhi, March 1969. Interview no.235

PRIMARY TEXTS CONSULTED

- Aurobindo, Sri. *Birth Centenary Library*. Vol. 1 Bande Mataram, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972.
- Besant, Annie Wood. *The Future Socialism*. Madras: Theosophist Office, 1912.
- Bose, Subhas Chandra, Sisir Kumar Bose, and Sugata Bose. *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*. Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Chatterji, Bankim Chandra, and M. K. Haldar. *Renaissance & Reaction in Nineteenth Century Bengal*. Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1977.
- Gan, Satish Chandra. "The Caste System of India. A Practical Form of Socialism." Dibrugarh, 1907.
- Gandh, M. K. "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru." In *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 392-96. New Delhi: Government of India, 1933.
- Gandhi, Indira. "Foreword by Indira Gandhi, Minister for Information and Broadcasting." In *Congressmen's Primer for Socialism*, edited by H. D. Malaviya. New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1965.
- Gandhi, M. K., and Anthony Parel (ed.) *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Gandhi, Mahatma. "Advice to Aligarh Students." *Young India*, 27 October 1920.
- . *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Vol. XVIII, Ahmedabad: The Publications Division, Government of India, 1965.
- . *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Press, 1927.
- Gopal, Sarvepalli, ed. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*. Vol. 29. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984.
- How India Can Save the Empire. A Collection of the Speeches Delivered by the Members of the Indian Deputation and Other Leaders on the Present*

- Situation and the Future Work before Us...* . Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1918.
- Kapoor, Mastram, ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*. Vol. 7. Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011.
- , ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*. Vol. 6. Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011.
- , ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*. Vol. 5. Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011.
- Lajpat Rai, Lala. "Ideals of Non-Cooperation." Madras: S. Ganesan, 1924.
- . *The United States of America: A Hindu's Impression and a Study*. Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, 1919.
- . *Young India: An Interpretation of the Nationalist Movement from Within*. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1916.
- Lohia, Rammanohar. "August Revolution: Twentyfifth Anniversary." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (20-17 March, 2011 2011): 60.
- . "Caste." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (20-27 March, 2011 2011).
- . *The Caste System*. Hyderabad, India,: Navahind, 1964.
- . *Interval During Politics*. Hyderabad: Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyasa, 1979. 1965.
- . *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism* [in]. Hyderabad, India,: Navahind, 1963.
- . "On Hidden Imperialisms." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (20-27 March, 2011 2011): 49-51.
- . "Programme to End Poverty." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (March 20-27, 2011 2011): 22-4.
- . "Revolution Arrested." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (20-27 March, 2011 2011): 51-58.
- . *Wheel of History*. Hyderabad: Navahind, 1955.
- Naoroji, Dadabhai. *Poverty of India*. London: Printed by V. Brooks, Day, 1878.
- Narayan, Jayaprakash. "J.P'S Call to R.S.S.". Bangalore: Jagarana Prakashana, 1979.
- . "Jp'S Unfinished Biography." In *Unfinished Revolution. A Political Biography of Jayaprakash Narayan*, edited by Ajit Bhattacharjea. New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2004.
- Narayan, Jayaprakash, and Raj Krishna. "The Socio-Economic Objectives and Programme of the Bihar Movement, 25 February 1975 ". In *In Theory and in Practice. Essays on the Politics of Jayaprakash Narayan*, edited by David Selbourne. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Narayan, Jayaprakash, and A. B. Shah. *Prison Diary, 1975*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1977.
- Pal, Bipin Chandra. *Nationality and Empire: A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problem*. Calcutta and Shimla: Thacker & Spink, 1916.
- Pant, D. . "Socialism, Its Embryonic Development in India " In *Published by the author*. Lahore, 1919.
- Prasad, Bimal, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*. Vol. IX (1969-1972). Delhi Manohar, 2008.

- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. Vol. II (1935-1939).* Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. VII (1954-1960).* Delhi: Manohar, 2005.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. I (1929-1935).* New Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. Vol. III (1939-1946).* Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. VI (1950-1954).* Delhi: Manohar, 2005.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. III (1939-1946).* Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. IV, (1946-1948).* Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. X (1972-1979).* Delhi: Manohar, 2009.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. V (1948-1950).* Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. VIII (1960-1966).* Delhi: Manohar, 2007.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. VI (1950-1954).* Delhi: Manohar, 2003.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. VII (1954-1960).* Delhi: Manohar, 2005.
- Vaswani, T. L. . *Creative Revolution.* Madras 1922.
- Wadia, B. P. "The Wider Swadeshi Movement." Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917.

NEWSPAPERS

Bombay Chronicle (1934, 1958)
Congress Socialist (1935-1936)
Everyman's (1973-1974)
Harijan (1940)
Hindustan Times (1957)
Janata (1946, 1949, 1952, 1954)
National Herald (1940)
New Republic (1975)
Pioneer (1948, 1951)
Times of India, (1974-1975)
The Advocate (1919)
The Illustrated Weekly of India (1974)
The Indian Annual Register (1931)
The Searchlight (1919)
Tribune (1950)
Statesman (1974)

Sunday (1977)

GOVERNMENT AND PARTY DOCUMENTS

- AITUC. "Report of the First Session (Held at Bombay, 1920)." edited by All-India Trade Union Congress. Bombay, 1920.
- "Statistical Report on General Elections, 1951, to First Lok Sabha." New Delhi: Election Commission of India 1951.
- "Statistical Report on General Elections, 1957, to Second Lok Sabha." New Delhi: Election Commission of India, 1957.
- Socialist Party (India). Presidential Address at the Pachmarhi Convention of the Socialist Party, 23 May 1952, in "Report of the Special Convention Held at Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh, 23rd to 27th May 1952," Socialist Party (India)(Bombay), 1952.

PUBLISHED MATERIAL

- AITUC. "Report of the First Session (Held at Bombay, 1920)." edited by All-India Trade Union Congress. Bombay, 1920.
- Alessiato, Elena. "Antipolitics as Participation: Paradox and Challenges." In *Challenges to Democratic Participation. Antipolitics, Deliberative Democracy and Pluralism*, edited by Andre Santos Campos and José Gomes André. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014.
- Altbach, Philip G. "Student Politics and Higher Education in India." In *The Student Revolution: A Global Analysis*, edited by Philip G. Altbach. Bombay: Lalvani Publishing House, 1970.
- . *The Student Revolution : A Global Analysis*. Bombay: Lalvani Pub. House, 1970.
- Andersen, Walter. "The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: I: Early Concerns ". *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 11 (Mar. 11 1972) (1972).
- . "The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: Ii: Who Represents the Hindus? ." *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 12 (Mar. 18 1972) (1972).
- . "The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: Iii: Participation in Politics ". *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 13 (Mar. 25, 1972) (1972).
- Arditi, Benjamin. *Politics on the Edges of Liberalism. Difference, Populism, Revolution, Agitation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.
- Arundale, George S. "The Home Rule League by Its Organising Secretary." Adyar: Annie Besant, 1916.
- Aurobindo, Sri. *Birth Centenary Library*. Vol. 1 Bande Mataram, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972.
- Badiou, Alain. *Being and Event*. London: Continuum, 2005.
- Bajwa, D. K. *Jayaprakash Narayan and Indian Politics*. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1987.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan and Indian Politics*. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1987.
- Barik, Radhakanta. *Politics of the Jp Movement*. New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1977.

- Basole, Amit. "The Technology Question in Lohia." *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010): 106-11.
- Basu, Amrita. "Grass Roots Movements and the State: Reflections on Radical Change in India." *Theory and Society* 16, no. 5 (1987): 647-74.
- Bayly, C. A. *Origins of Nationality in South Asia. Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- . "Rammohan Roy and the Advent of Constitutional Liberalism in India, 1800-30." *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 1 (2007): 25-41.
- . *Recovering Liberties : Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire : The Wiles Lectures Given at the Queen's University of Belfast, 2007*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Benford, Robert D., and David A. Snow. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000).
- Besant, Annie Wood. *The Future Socialism*. Madras: Theosophist Office, 1912.
- Bhatt, Chetan *Hindu Nationalism. Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths*. Oxford: Berg, 2001.
- Bhattacharjee, Ajit. *Jayaprakash Narayan : A Political Biography*. Delhi: Vikas, 1975.
- . *Unfinished Revolution. A Political Biography of Jayaprakash Narayan*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2004.
- Bhattacharjee, Manash. "Aam Aadmi Party: Government of the Governed?". *Economic and Political Weekly* XLVIII, no. 52 (December 28 2014).
- Bhave, Vinoba. *Democratic Values*. Kashi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1962.
- Bilgrami, Akeel. "Gandhi and Marx." *Social Scientist* 40, no. 9/10 (September-October 2012 2012): 3-25.
- . "Gandhi, Newton, and the Enlightenment." *Social Scientist* 34, no. 5/6 (May - Jun., 2006 2006): 17-35.
- . "Gandhi, the Philosopher." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 39 (Sep. 27 - Oct. 03, 2003 2003): 4159-65.
- . "Occidentalism, the Very Idea: An Essay on Enlightenment and Enchantment." *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 2 (Spring 2006 2006): 381-411.
- Bose, Subhas Chandra, Sisir Kumar Bose, and Sugata Bose. *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*. Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Bose, Sugata, and Ayesha Jalal. *Modern South Asia : History, Culture, Political Economy*. 2nd ed. ed. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Campus, Donatella. *Antipolitics in Power. Populist Language as a Tool for Government*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press Inc., 2010.
- Canovan, Margaret. "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy." *Political Studies* 47, no. 01 (1999): 2-16.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "'In the Name of Politics': Sovereignty, Democracy, and the Multitude in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, no. 30 (July 23-29 2005): 3293-301.
- . "Legacies of Bandung: Decolonisation and the Politics of Culture." *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, no. 46 (2005): 4812-18.
- Chandra, Bipan. *In the Name of Democracy. Jp Movement and the Emergency*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2003.

- Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments : Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, N.J. ; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- . *The Nation and Its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Chatterji, Bankim Chandra, and M. K. Halder. *Renaissance & Reaction in Nineteenth Century Bengal*. Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1977.
- Cohn, Bernard S. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge : The British in India*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Dalton, Dennis Gilmore. *Indian Idea of Freedom : Political Thought of Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore*. Gurgaon: Academic Press, 1982.
- Dandavate, Madhu, and Jayaprakash Narayan, eds. *Jayaprakash Narayan : Struggle with Values. A Centenary Tribute*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2002.
- Devji, Faisal. *The Impossible Indian : Gandhi and the Temptation of Violence*. London: Hurst, 2012.
- . "Morality in the Shadow of Politics." In *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, edited by Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji, 107-26. Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- . "Morality in the Shadow of Politics." In *Political Thought in Action. The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, edited by Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji, 107-26. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- . *Muslim Zion. Pakistan as a Political Idea*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Dirks, Nicholas B. *Castes of Mind : Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton, N.J. ; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Drieberg, Trevor, and Sarala Jag Mohan. *Emergency in India*. New Delhi: Manas, 1975.
- Foran, John. *Taking Power. On the Origins of Third World Revolutions*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Fox, R. G. "Gandhian Socialism and Hindu Nationalism: Cultural Domination in the World Sytem." *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 25, no. 3 (Nov 1987 1987).
- Frankel, Francine R. *India's Political Economy, 1947-1977 : The Gradual Revolution*. Princeton ; Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1978.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. London: The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1922.
- Gamson, William A. . *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990.
- Gan, Satish Chandra. "The Caste System of India. A Practical Form of Socialism." Dibrugarh, 1907.
- Gandh, M. K. "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru." In *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 392-96. New Delhi: Government of India, 1933.
- Gandhi, Indira. "Foreword by Indira Gandhi, Minister for Information and Broadcasting." In *Congressmen'S Primer for Socialism*, edited by H. D. Malaviya. New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1965.

- Gandhi, M. K., and Anthony Parel (ed.) *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Gandhi, Mahatma. "Advice to Aligarh Students." *Young India*, 27 October 1920.
- . *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Vol. XVIII, Ahmedabad: The Publications Division, Government of India, 1965.
- . *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Press, 1927.
- Gandhi, Mahatma "The Dissenters." *Harijan*, 20 January 1940.
- Ghose, Sankar. *Socialism and Communism in India*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971.
- Ghosh, Partha S. *Bjp and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism : From Periphery to Centre*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1999.
- Gill, Stephen. "Pessimism of the Intelligence, Optimism of the Will: Reflections on Political Agency in the Age of "Empire"." In *Perspectives on Gramsci: Politics, Culture and Social Theory*, edited by Joseph Francese, 97-109. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Goldstone, Jack A. "Introduction. Bridging Institutionalized and Non-Institutionalized Politics." In *State, Parties, and Social Movements*, edited by Jack A. Goldstone. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Golwalkar, M. S. . *Bunch of Thoughts*. Bangalore: Vikrama Prakashan, 1966.
- Gopal, Sarvepalli, ed. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*. Vol. 29. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984.
- Goswami, Manu. *Producing India : From Colonial Economy to National Space*. Chicago, Ill. ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Graumann, Carl F., and Serge Moscovici. *Changing Conceptions of Crowd Mind and Behavior*. New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986.
- Guha, Ranajit. *Dominance without Hegemony. History and Power in Colonial India*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- . *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hardgrave Jr., Robert L., and Stanley Kochanek. *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation*. Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993.
- Hardin, Russell. *Collective Action*. Baltimore: Published for Resources for the Future by the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- . *Multitude : War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. London, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2006.
- Hayward, Jack. "The Populist Challenge to Elitist Democracies in Europe." In *Elitism, Populism and European Politics*, edited by Jack Hayward. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Hindess, Barry. "Antipolitical Motifs in Western Political Discourse." In *The End of Politics? Explorations into Modern Antipolitics*, edited by Andreas Schedler. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997.
- How India Can Save the Empire. A Collection of the Speeches Delivered by the Members of the Indian Deputation and Other Leaders on the Present Situation and the Future Work before Us... .* Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1918.

- Imam, Zafar. "The Rise of Soviet Russia and Socialism in India, 1917-1929." In *Socialism in India*, edited by B. R. Nanda, 42-68. Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1972.
- Iyer, G. Subramania. "The Swadeshi Movement--a Natural Development." *The Modern Review*, February 1907, 137-42.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Hindu Nationalism : A Reader*. Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- . *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics. 1925 to the 1990s*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999.
- . *India's Silent Revolution : The Rise of the Lower Castes*. London: C. Hurst, 2003.
- . "The Rise of the Other Backward Classes in the Hindi Belt." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 1 (Feb. 2000 2000): 86-108.
- Jani, Pranav. "Bihar, California and the Us Midwest: The Early Radicalization of Jayaprakash Narayan." *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 2 (2013): 155-68.
- Jasper, James M. *The Art of Moral Protest : Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Jeffrey, Craig. *Timepass. Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- Kapila, Shruti. "A History of Violence." In *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, edited by Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji, 177-99. Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- . *An Intellectual History for India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- . "Self, Spencer and Swaraj: Nationalist Thought and Critiques of Liberalism, 1890-1920." *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 01 (2007): 109-27.
- Kapila, Shruti, and Faisal Devji. *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Kapoor, Mastram, ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*. Vol. 6. Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011.
- , ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*. Vol. 7. Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011.
- , ed. *Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*. Vol. 5. Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2011.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta. "A Critique of the Passive Revolution." *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 45/47 (1988): 2429-44.
- Kejriwal, Arvind. *Swaraj*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2012.
- Kelkar, Indumati. *Dr. Rammanohar Lohia: His Life and Philosophy*. New Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, 2009.
- Ker, James Campbell. *Political Trouble in India, 1907-1917*. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1917.
- Kopf, David. *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance. The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773-1835*. Berkeley: California University Press, 1969.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002.

- Kothari, Rajni. "The Congress 'System' in India." *Asian Survey* 4, no. 12 (Dec. 1964) (1964): 1161-73.
- Kumar, Anand. "A Constructive Challenge to the Political Class: The Aam Aadmi's Party." *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 07 (February 16 2013): 11-15.
- . "Understanding Lohia's Political Sociology: Intersectionality of Caste, Class, Gender and Language." *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010): 64-70.
- Laclau, Ernesto. *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso, 2005.
- Lajpat Rai, Lala. "Ideals of Non-Cooperation." Madras: S. Ganesan, 1924.
- . *The United States of America: A Hindu's Impression and a Study*. Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, 1919.
- . *Young India: An Interpretation of the Nationalist Movement from Within*. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1916.
- Lal, Lakshmi Narain. *Jayaprakash : India's Voice, India's Soul*. New Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1977.
- Le Bon, Gustave, and R. K. Merton. *The Crowd : A Study of the Popular-Mind*. New York: Viking Press, 1960.
- Limaye, Madhu. *Galaxy of the Indian Socialist Leaders*. New Delhi: B.R. Pub. Corp., 2000.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. London: Heinemann, 1960.
- Lipsky, Michael. "Protest as a Political Resource." *American Political Science Review* 62, no. 4 (1968).
- Lohia, Rammanohar. "August Revolution: Twentyfifth Anniversary." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (20-17 March, 2011 2011): 60.
- . "Caste." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (20-27 March, 2011 2011).
- . *The Caste System*. Hyderabad, India,: Navahind, 1964.
- . *Interval During Politics*. Hyderabad: Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyasa, 1979. 1965.
- . *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism* [in]. Hyderabad, India,: Navahind, 1963.
- . "On Hidden Imperialisms." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (20-27 March, 2011 2011): 49-51.
- . "Programme to End Poverty." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (March 20-27, 2011 2011): 22-4.
- . "Revolution Arrested." *Janata* 66, no. 8-9 (20-27 March, 2011 2011): 51-58.
- . *Wheel of History*. Hyderabad: Navahind, 1955.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair C. *After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory*. 2nd ed. ed. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.
- Maclean, Kama. *A Revolutionary History of Interwar India. Violence, Image, Voice and Text*. London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers), 2015.
- Maclean, Kama, and J. Daniel Elam. "Reading Revolutionaries: Texts, Acts, and Afterlives of Political Action in Late Colonial South Asia. Who Is a Revolutionary?". *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 2 (2013): 113-23.
- Malkani, K. R. *The Rss Story*. New Delhi: Impex India, 1980.
- Manela, Erez. *The Wilsonian Moment : Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

- Manjapra, Kris. "Communist Internationalism and Transcolonial Recognition." In *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones. South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas*, edited by Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra, 159-77. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- . *M. N. Roy : Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism*. Delhi: Routledge, 2010.
- Mantena, Karuna. "Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence." *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (May 2012 2012): 455-70.
- . "On Gandhi'S Critique of the State: Sources, Contexts, Conjunctures." *Modern Intellectual History* 9, no. 03 (November 2012 2012): 535-63.
- Markovits, Claude. *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-1939 : The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Masani, Minoo. *Jp, Mission Partly Accomplished*. Delhi: Macmillan Co. of India, 1977.
- Mastropaolo, Alfio. *Is Democracy a Lost Cause? : Paradoxes of an Imperfect Invention* [in Translated from the Italian.]. Essex: ECPR Press. University of Essex, 2012.
- Mazzarella, William. "The Myth of the Multitude, or, Who's Afraid of the Crowd?". *Critical Inquiry* 36, no. 4 (2010): 697-727.
- Mehta, Uday S. "Gandhi on Democracy, Politics and the Ethics of Everyday Life." In *Political Thought in Action. The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, edited by Shruti Kapila and Faisal Devji, 88-106. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Mete, Vittorio. "Four Types of Anti-Politics: Insights from the Italian Case." *Modern Italy* 15, no. 1 (2010).
- Mirza, Mahdi Ali. *Welcome Each Rebuff*. Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1950.
- Misra, B. B., and Aditya Prasad Jha. *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran, 1917-18*. Govt. of Bihar, 1963.
- Moffat, Chris. "Experiments in Political Truth." *Postcolonial Studies* 16, no. 2 (2013): 185-201.
- Moscovici, Serge. *The Age of the Crowd : A Historical Treatise on Mass Psychology* [in Translation of: L'a\0302ge des foules.]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Nanda, B. R. *In Gandhi'S Footsteps: The Life and Times of Jamnalal Bajaj*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Naoroji, Dadabhai. *Poverty of India*. London: Printed by V. Brooks, Day, 1878.
- Narayan, Jayaprakash. "J.P'S Call to R.S.S.". Bangalore: Jagarana Prakashana, 1979.
- . "Jp'S Unfinished Biography." In *Unfinished Revolution. A Political Biography of Jayaprakash Narayan*, edited by Ajit Bhattacharjea. New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2004.
- . "Political Trends." Socialist Party, 1951.
- Narayan, Jayaprakash, and Raj Krishna. "The Socio-Economic Objectives and Programme of the Bihar Movement, 25 February 1975 ". In *In Theory and in Practice. Essays on the Politics of Jayaprakash Narayan*, edited by David Selbourne. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Narayan, Jayaprakash, and A. B. Shah. *Prison Diary, 1975*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1977.

- Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1936 (1958).
- . *Glimpses of World History*. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2003.
- . *Nehru on Socialism : Selected Speeches and Writings*. New Delhi, India: Perspective Publications, 1964.
- . "Whither India?". In *Nehru on Socialism: Selected Speeches and Writings*. New Delhi: Perspective Publications, 1933.
- Oberschall, Anthony. *Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities*. New Brunswick (U.S.A.): Transaction, 1993.
- Oesterheld, Joachim. "Lohia as a Doctoral Student in Berlin." *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010): 85-91.
- Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action. Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.
- Omvedt, Gail. "Peasants, Dalits and Women: Democracy and India'S New Social Movements." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 24, no. 1 (1994).
- . *Reinventing Revolution : New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993.
- Opp, Karl-Dieter. *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements. A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Overstreet, Gene Donald, and Marshall Windmiller. *Communism in India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959.
- Pal, Bipin Chandra. *Nationality and Empire: A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problem*. Calcutta and Shimla: Thacker & Spink, 1916.
- Palkar, Narayan Hari. *Dr. Hedgewar*. Pune: Bharatiya Vichar Sadhana, 2007.
- Pandey, Gyanendra. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Pant, D. . "Socialism, Its Embryonic Development in India " In *Published by the author*. Lahore, 1919.
- Parekh, Bhikhu. "Nehru and the National Philosophy of India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 26, no. 1/2 (1991): 35-48.
- Pouchepadass, Jacques. *Champaran and Gandhi : Planters, Peasants, and Gandhian Politics*. New Delhi ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Prakash, Gyan. "The Colonial Genealogy of Society. Community and Political Modernity in India." In *The Social in Question. New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, edited by Patrick Joyce. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Prasad, Bimal, ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*. Vol. VI (1950-1954). Delhi: Manohar, 2003.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*. Vol. X (1972-1979). Delhi: Manohar, 2009.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*. Vol. VIII (1960-1966). Delhi: Manohar, 2007.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*. Vol. VII (1954-1960). Delhi: Manohar, 2005.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works*. Vol. IV, (1946-1948). Delhi: Manohar, 2000.

- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. V (1948-1950)*. Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. III (1939-1946)*. Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. Vol. III (1939-1946)*. Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. Vol. II (1935-1939)*. Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. VI (1950-1954)*. Delhi: Manohar, 2005.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. IX (1969-1972)*. Delhi: Manohar, 2008.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. I (1929-1935)*. New Delhi: Manohar, 2000.
- , ed. *Jayaprakash Narayan. Selected Works. Vol. VII (1954-1960)*. Delhi: Manohar, 2005.
- Rai, Raghu, and Sunanda K. Datta-Ray. *Bihar Shows the Way*. Bombay: Nachiketa Publications, 1977.
- Rajagopal, Arvind. "The Emergency as Prehistory of the New Indian Middle Class." *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 5 (2011): 1003-49
- . *Politics after Television : Religious Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Indian Public*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Ram, Suresh. *Vinoba and His Mission. Being an Account of the Growth and Development of the Bhoodan Yagna Movement*. Kashi, India: Akhil Bharat Sarv Seva Sangh, 1954.
- Rao, Rahul. *Third World Protest : Between Home and the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Rasul, M. A. *A History of the All India Kisan Sabha*. Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1974.
- Ray, Raka, and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein. "Introduction. In the Beginning There Was the Nehruvian State." In *Social Movements in India. Power, Poverty and Politics*, edited by Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2005.
- Reddy, G. K. C., ed. *Fifty Years of Socialist Movement in India. Retrospect and Prospects*. Delhi: Samata Era Publications, 1984.
- Roy, Srirupa. *Beyond Belief : India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism*. Durham, N.C. ; London: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Rudolph, Lloyd I., and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. *In Pursuit of Lakshmi : The Political Economy of the Indian State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Samaddar, Ranabir. "Jayaprakash Narayan and the Problem of Representative Democracy." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 31 (2008): 49-58.
- Sarkar, Jayabrata. "Power, Hegemony and Politics: Leadership Struggle in Congress in the 1930s." *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2006): 333-70.
- Sarkar, Sumit. *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908*. [New Delhi]: People's Publishing House, 1973.

- Sarkar, Tanika. "Problems of Social Power and the Discourses of the Hindu Right." In *Social Movements in India: Poverty, Power and Politics*, edited by Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2005.
- Scarfe, Allan and Wendy. *J.P. His Biography*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1975.
- Scarfe, Allan, and Wendy Scarfe. *Remembering Jayaprakesh*. New Delhi: Siddharth, 1997.
- Schedler, Andreas. *The End of Politics? Explorations into Modern Antipolitics*. London: Macmillan, 1997.
- . "Introduction: Antipolitics--Closing and Colonizing the Public Sphere." In *The End of Politics? Explorations into Modern Antipolitics*, edited by Andreas Schedler. London: Macmillan, 1997.
- Scott, David. *Conscripts of Modernity. The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- . *Omens of Adversity. Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance : Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Selbourne, David. *In Theory and in Practice. Essays on the Politics of Jayaprakash Narayan*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Seth, Sanjay. "Rewriting Histories of Nationalism. The Politics of "Moderate Nationalism" in India, 1870-1905." In *Nationalist Movement in India. A Reader*, edited by Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, 30-48. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Shah, Ghanshyam. *Protest Movements in Two Indian States : A Study of the Gujarat and Bihar Movements*. Delhi: Ajanta publications, 1977.
- . "Ram Manohar Lohia on Caste in Indian Politics." In *Caste and Democratic Politics in India*, edited by D. L. Seth. Delhi: Permanent Black 2004.
- Shils, Edward Albert. *Torment of Secrecy: The Background and Consequences of American Security Policies*. Glenoce: Free Press, 1956.
- Singh, Lata. *Popular Translations of Nationalism: Bihar 1920-1922*. Delhi: Primus Books, 2012.
- Skaria, Ajay. "Gandhi'S Politics: Liberalism and the Question of the Ashram." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 955-86.
- Som, Reba. *Differences within Consensus : The Left and Right in the Congress, 1929-1939*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995.
- "Statistical Report on General Elections, 1951, to First Lok Sabha." New Delhi: Election Commission of India 1951.
- "Statistical Report on General Elections, 1957, to Second Lok Sabha." New Delhi: Election Commission of India, 1957.
- Stokes, Eric. *The English Utilitarians and India*. Delhi Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Subramaniam, Narendra. "Populism in India." *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 27, no. 01 (2007).
- Tejani, Shabnum. *Indian Secularism : A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950*. Bangalore: Permanent Black, 2007.

- Tennyson, Hallam. *Saint on the March. The Story of Vinoba*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1955.
- Thakir, Manish K. . "Jp and the Limits of 'Lokniti'." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 44 (Nov. 1 2008): 62-63.
- Tilly, Charles. *European Revolutions, 1492-1992*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
- . *From Mobilization to Revolution*. London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978.
- Tolpadi, Rajaram. "Context, Discourse and Vision of Lohia'S Socialism." *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010): 71-77.
- Trautmann, Thomas R. *Aryans and British India*. Delhi: Yoda Press, 2004.
- Virno, Paolo. *A Grammar of the Multitude : For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. Los Angeles, Calif.: Semiotext(e), 2004.
- Wadia, B. P. "The Wider Swadeshi Movement." Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917.
- Wilson, Jon E. *The Domination of Strangers. Modern Governance in Eastern India, 1780-1835*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Worsley, Peter. "The Concept of Populism." In *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, edited by G. Ionescu and E. Gellner. London: Weidenfelt and Nicholson, 1969.
- Yadav, Yogendra. "Jp'S Changing Ideas on Social Change." In *Jp and Social Change*, edited by Nageshwar Prasad, 48-63. New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1992.
- . "On Remembering Lohia." *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 40 (2010): 46-50.

WEBSITES

- Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development:
http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/publication/1266/Lokniti_Land_Grab_Mar2012.pdf
- Website of the Samajwadi Party :
<http://www.samajwadiparty.in/ourleader-ramlohia.html>
- Website of the Janata Dal:
<http://rjd.co.in/ideology.html>
- Website of the Janata Dal (United):
<http://www.janatadalunited.org/>
- Website of the Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on General Election, 1975, to Legislative Assembly of Gujarat:
http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/SE_1975/Statistical%20Report%20Gujarat%201975.pdf
- Website of the Election Commission of India, Statistical Report on General Election, 1977, to the Sixth Lok Sabha: http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/LS_1977/Vol_I_LS_77.pdf